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# Daniel in the Lions' Den

*Scripture: Daniel 6:1-28*

**Theme: Faithfulness to God may cost everything**

*4th-6th Grade (Ages 9-11)*

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Free curriculum for small and rural churches

## Lesson Overview

Sunday School Lesson Overview: Nehemiah Rebuilds the Walls Theme: "God gives us work to do, and He goes with us!" Introduction (Engage & Relate): Start by showing a picture or video clip of Jerusalem's broken-down walls from Nehemiah's time. Ask: "What do you think happened when the walls were broken? Why do you think people felt so sad or scared?" This sets the stage for how God used Nehemiah's sadness into a job that brought hope back to his city. Lesson Body: 1. A Call from God (Nehemiah 1:3-4) Nehemiah heard the sad news about Jerusalem's walls being destroyed. When he thought, "This must be God's job," God didn't send him to sit still, He gave him a specific task: rebuild them. Deeper Question: Why do you think God chose someone like Nehemiah (a foreigner, young, and a king's cupbearer) to lead this? How can we trust God to use us for big things, even when we feel small? 2. Preparing for the Work (Nehemiah 2:1-8) Nehemiah didn't rush, he prayed, asked God for wisdom, and planned carefully. He asked the king for help and worked early mornings to start the project. Personal Application: How can we "prepare" for God's work in our lives? Do we pray, ask for guidance, or just jump in? What's one small way we can start this week? 3. Obstacles and Perseverance (Nehemiah 4-6) The enemies of Jerusalem tried to stop Nehemiah by mocking him and even attacking the workers. But Nehemiah kept going, he prayed, worked in teams, and trusted God to protect them. Deeper Question: When we face "enemies" (like fear, distractions, or criticism), how can we "build up" our faith like Nehemiah did? What's one way we can stand firm today? 4. Celebrating God's Work (Closing Reflection) When the walls were rebuilt, the people rejoiced! Nehemiah also rebuilt the temple and made sure everyone followed God's rules. Encouragement: God doesn't just give us work, He goes with us! Whether it's fixing broken walls, helping others, or serving in church, we can trust He's there, even when it's hard. Closing Activity (Engage & Wrap Up): Hand out small wooden blocks or LEGO pieces. Say: "Today, we're like Nehemiah, God gives us work to do. Let's build something together!" (Have kids arrange blocks into a wall or fence, symbolizing unity and God's protection.) Teacher Tips: - Use props like a broken-down toy city or a "wall" made of cardboard to act out rebuilding. - End with a prayer: "Dear God, help us trust You when our work feels big or scary. Amen!"

## Bible Story

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### Nehemiah Rebuilds the Walls

One hot summer day in Jerusalem, a young man named Nehemiah sat at dinner with his friends. King Artaxerxes had given Nehemiah a special assignment, he had been invited to visit Jerusalem to check on how well the people were doing. Nehemiah's heart pounded with excitement and worry. He remembered how the walls of the city had been broken down long ago, and the people were left vulnerable. The city felt empty and broken, much like the walls themselves. As Nehemiah prayed, he asked God to help him bring hope and strength to the people, and to guide him in rebuilding what had been lost.

When Nehemiah arrived, he was shocked. The city looked different than he remembered. The gates were in ruins, and the walls were missing large sections. The people were sad and discouraged, especially the women and children who no longer felt safe. Nehemiah's first job was to tell them God's word: "Do not be afraid; do not give up." He reminded them that God had promised to protect them and that He was with them, even if the walls were broken. Nehemiah also made sure to listen to the people's worries and fears, showing kindness and compassion. He knew rebuilding wouldn't be easy, but he trusted God to lead the way.

As Nehemiah began planning, he faced opposition. Some leaders, like Sanballat and Tobiah, mocked him and said, "What are you doing here? Are you going to rebuild them?" They wanted to stop him, but Nehemiah kept working, praying, and encouraging the people. He divided the workers into teams and set a clear schedule. Some days, they worked early in the morning, and some at night. They used strong oxen to push the stones, and even a donkey to carry extra supplies. The workers worked hard, and soon, the walls started to rise again. Though they faced challenges, like attacks from enemies and even a cold winter, they kept going, trusting God to help them.

One day, Nehemiah noticed something strange. The workers were not just building the walls, they were also rebuilding the city's defenses with watchtowers and gates. Nehemiah realized that God wasn't just helping them rebuild the walls so they could be safe physically, but also so they could be strong spiritually. He reminded the people to stay faithful to God and to follow His commands. Even when enemies tried to scare them, Nehemiah kept encouraging the people: "The Lord your God will fight for you. Do not be afraid." The walls were now stronger, and the people felt proud to have rebuilt something together.

Nehemiah's story shows us that rebuilding can be hard, but God is always with us. When our lives feel broken, whether it's our families, friendships, or even our own hearts, we can trust God to help us rebuild. Nehemiah didn't do it alone; he worked with the people, prayed for God's guidance, and kept his heart focused on Him. Just like Nehemiah, we can face challenges with courage, knowing that God is stronger than any obstacle. What is one way we can rebuild something in our lives or in our community today? How can we trust God to help us, even when it feels difficult?

## Key Verse

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### Daniel 6:23

Nehemiah 2:18 , A Kind God Helps Us Build Something Great! Imagine you've just been given a really exciting job, to help rebuild a broken-down place where people once lived together in peace. Maybe it was a wall that had been torn down, or a garden that was no longer safe to walk in. When Nehemiah told the people what he'd been told to do, they cheered up and said, "Let's start rebuilding!" Their hearts were happy because they knew God was working in their lives too. This verse tells us that Nehemiah didn't just get the big job on his own. He remembered how kind and strong God had been to help him before, like when God gave him the courage to ask the king for permission. When the people heard Nehemiah speak of God's good hand, they felt encouraged to begin again. Their answer was simple but powerful: "Yes, let's work together!" This shows that sometimes, when we feel unsure or alone, God's presence can lift us up and give us the courage to take the first step. But why did Nehemiah and the people choose to rebuild? What made their work feel like "good work"? Think about something in your own life that you've been working toward, maybe helping your family, fixing something at school, or even

learning a new skill. When you see how far you've come or how proud you feel, you might feel excited to keep going, just like Nehemiah's team did. Their work wasn't just about building bricks; it was about fixing what was broken and making a home again. Maybe God is asking you to rebuild something in your heart today, like being kinder to a friend, praying more, or standing up for what's right. Here's something deeper to consider: When Nehemiah shared about God's goodness, the people's response wasn't just enthusiasm, they were ready to act. That's what we call faith in action. Faith isn't just about believing that God loves us; it's also about believing in God to help us do what He wants us to do. Do you think Nehemiah would have started rebuilding if he didn't trust God could help? Why or why not? Maybe you've felt like God is guiding you to try something new, like asking for help at school or volunteering at church. How can you trust Him to help you through it? Personal application: Nehemiah's story reminds us that when we feel small or scared, God's grace is stronger than our doubts. God doesn't always give us the answers upfront, but He does give us His presence, His hand, to hold onto. This week, think about a time when you felt ready to take a step forward, even if you weren't sure how. Did you ask for God's help? What did He teach you about courage and trust? Maybe you can write down one small thing you'd like to rebuild or improve in your own life, and ask God to help you get started. Remember: God's hand is always there to guide you!

## Activities

### Activity 1:

1. Divide and Prepare: Split the class into 5, 6 teams of 3, 4 students. Give each team a small box (e.g., cereal box) to cut into 3, 4 "wall segment" rectangles, along with a paper plate to glue as a foundation.
2. Design Phase (2 minutes): Ask teams to discuss: "How did Nehemiah encourage his team to rebuild together? How can we work as a team to make our wall strong?" Have them sketch their design with markers before gluing.
3. Build and Present (7 minutes):
4. Let teams glue their wall segments onto the plate, securing them with tape/sticks if needed.
5. Ask each team to share:
6. What problem did they face while building? (e.g., uneven pieces)
7. How did they solve it together? (e.g., took turns cutting, used extra glue)
8. How does this remind you of Nehemiah's leadership?
9. Reflect (3 minutes): Close by asking: "When have you seen a team work through challenges together? How did it feel to contribute?" Connect to Nehemiah's prayer (Nehemiah 1:6) for God's help.

### Activity 2:

1. Introduce the Prayer (2 minutes):
2. Read Nehemiah 1:4, 11 aloud, emphasizing lines like:
3. "They said to me, 'Pray to the Lord for us...'" (v. 5) and "Do not let my eyes see their shame..." (v. 6).
4. Ask: "How does Nehemiah's prayer show he trusted God?"
5. Create the Poster (7 minutes):
6. Each group gets a poster sheet. Assign roles: drawer (illustrates a scene), writer (quotes key phrases), speaker (presents to the class).
7. Students can:
8. Draw Nehemiah praying, the wall, or Jerusalem.
9. Write bullet points (e.g., "Ask God for strength") or copy a verse (e.g., "God hears our prayers").
10. Use Bible verses to inspire their art (e.g., Psalm 34:6 for courage).
11. Share and Reflect (6 minutes):
12. Each group presents their poster, explaining:
13. What did you draw to show Nehemiah's prayer? (e.g., a broken wall)

14. How did you apply one line of his prayer to your own life? (e.g., "When I feel scared, I pray to God for courage.")
15. Facilitate class discussion: "Where have you felt God's strength like Nehemiah did? What's one prayer you'd like to share with God today?"
16. Personal Application Tip for Both Activities:
17. End each session by asking: "What's one way you can ask God for help or courage this week, like Nehemiah did?" Write responses on a class whiteboard for accountability. For example:
18. "When I'm worried about homework, I'll pray to God for patience."
19. "If my team doesn't agree, I'll trust God to help us work together."

## Discussion Questions

- Here are four open-ended discussion questions for upper elementary students (ages 9, 11) about Nehemiah Rebuilds the Walls (Nehemiah 1, 6). These questions encourage reflection on the story while connecting it to personal experiences and moral growth.
- 1. Courage and Conviction
  - Nehemiah was shocked when he learned about Jerusalem's broken walls. He didn't just accept their state, he felt an urgent call to act. How do you think Nehemiah's feelings might have changed if he had ignored the problem or thought, "Maybe someone else will fix it first"? Why do you think God wanted him to lead the rebuild? Have you ever felt like you had a mission to fix something in your community, school, or family? What made you feel that way, and how did you decide to act?
  - (Deeper thought: How can we show courage like Nehemiah when we see injustice or something broken in our world? What might stop us from taking action, and how can we overcome those fears?)
- 2. Teamwork and Trust
  - Nehemiah didn't rebuild the walls alone, he gathered people (like the men and women mentioned in Nehemiah 4:6) to work together. The story shows how they faced threats but kept going because they trusted each other. If you had to help rebuild something (like a school project, a neighborhood park, or even a family tradition), what would make it easier for everyone to work together? Have you ever worked with a team that made progress even when things got hard? What lessons did you learn about trusting others?
  - (Personal connection: How can we apply teamwork to everyday challenges, like helping a friend who is struggling or organizing a class project? What might go wrong if we didn't trust each other, and how can we fix it?)
- 3. Persistence and Persecution
  - The enemy (Sanballat and Tobiah) tried to discourage Nehemiah by attacking the wall and spreading rumors. Nehemiah didn't give up, he kept praying, planning, and working. How do you think Nehemiah's persistence helped the rebuild? What's something you've wanted to accomplish (like learning an instrument, improving a skill, or fixing a relationship) that almost gave up on? What kept you going when things got tough?
  - (Reflection: Nehemiah's story reminds us that when we face haters or doubters, God wants us to keep trusting Him. Do you think Nehemiah's success was because of his own strength or because of God's power working through him? How can we ask God to help us stay strong when life gets difficult?)
- 4. Legacy and Purpose
  - After the walls were rebuilt, Nehemiah didn't just celebrate, he made sure people knew they'd been built with God's help. He also made sure the people obeyed God's laws (like the Sabbath) to keep Jerusalem strong. If you had a chance to "rebuild" something in your life (like a friendship, a family tradition, or even a school club), how would you make sure it lasted for years to come? Why do you think Nehemiah cared so much about keeping the walls in good shape, not just for himself, but for others?

- (Personal application: Nehemiah's story shows that our actions have lasting effects. Think about a time when you made a choice that had an impact on someone else. How did you feel about that, and why does it matter that your legacy matters? What's one thing you can do today to build something meaningful for your community or family?)
- These questions encourage students to:
  - Relate to the story (e.g., "What if I felt like Nehemiah?").
  - Explore deeper themes (e.g., courage, teamwork, persistence).
  - Apply lessons to life (e.g., how their choices matter).
  - Reflect on God's role in their own struggles.
  - Would you like any of these adapted for group discussions or paired with Scripture verses?

## Prayer Focus

*Prayer Focus: "Building Faith Like Nehemiah" Heavenly Father, we come before You with hearts full of wonder and courage. Like Nehemiah, we want to trust You completely, even when our job feels overwhelming or the walls around us feel too big to fix alone. When we feel afraid or doubt our own strength, remind us that You are the One who gives us the power to stand up for what's right, just like He gave Nehemiah the heart to rebuild Jerusalem. Help us to listen to You, even when we don't hear clearly, and give us the boldness to ask for help when we need it. Show us how to work together, just like the people in Nehemiah's story, because no one works alone in Your kingdom. Deeper Questions for Reflection: 1. When did you feel like something was "too big" to handle, like rebuilding a friendship, fixing a mistake, or standing up for what's fair? How did you respond? 2. Nehemiah prayed first (Nehemiah 1), asking God for strength before he started working. Where in your life do you need to pause and pray right now? 3. He faced opposition (Nehemiah 4, 6), like the enemies who tried to stop him. Have you ever felt like someone was trying to "build walls" around you? What can you do to keep building up, like Nehemiah did? Personal Application: Think about a time you wanted to fix something in your life, but you felt stuck. Maybe it was a family challenge, a school situation, or even a habit you wanted to change. Nehemiah's story shows us that even the hardest work starts with trusting God. Today, ask: Where in my heart do I need to rebuild trust in God, like Nehemiah rebuilt the city? Prayer Together: "Lord, You made us to work together, to care for one another, and to rebuild what's broken. Like Nehemiah, we want to start small, praying first, then asking for others to help. When the walls feel heavy (like the enemies' words or my own doubts), remind me: You hold the plans, and You'll give me strength. Amen." Closing Thought: "The walls of Jerusalem didn't fall because of one person, Nehemiah worked with thousands! You're not alone in this. No matter how big the job, God is with you, just like He was with Nehemiah."*

### >> 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.