Bible Point
God wants us to work together for him.

Bible Verse
“Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works” (Hebrews 10:24).

Growing Closer to Jesus
Children will ■ work together to build a wall around a temple,
■ discover that they can accomplish more when they work together, and
■ see that they can combine their gifts with other people’s gifts to bring God’s message to others.

Teacher Enrichment

Bible Basis
■ Nehemiah rebuilds the wall.

Nehemiah 2:10 hints that the task facing Nehemiah would not be easy. At least two of the leaders of people living near Jerusalem—Sanballat and Tobiah—were unhappy about Nehemiah’s plans. They didn’t want anyone to help the Israelites.

Nehemiah inspected the wall in secret because he wanted to keep his intentions to himself until the time was right to reveal them. He already knew about the opposition of Sanballat and Tobiah, but he didn’t know if other opposition existed, even within the city of Jerusalem. After conducting an exploratory examination of the ruined wall, he gathered the Jewish officials and told them of his plan, of God’s blessing, and of the king’s help. And they were ready to start building!

The wall was rebuilt in sections by families who probably lived near the sections they rebuilt. The secret of the Jews’ early success in rebuilding the wall is revealed in Nehemiah 4:6: “The people had worked with enthusiasm.” When the wall was about halfway rebuilt and the gaps were being closed, Sanballat and Tobiah met with other enemies of the Jews and plotted their next steps. The Jews responded by praying and posting guards. Half the men worked, as the other half—well-armed—stood guard.

The final opposition to the rebuilding came in two phases: first an attempt to draw Nehemiah out so that he could be killed, and then an attempt to deceive him into showing fear and weakness by hiding in the Temple. Both attempts failed, and the rebuilding continued. For more than 100 years, the wall had lain destroyed; now, after only 52 days, it had been rebuilt!

Prayer
• Consider Ecclesiastes 4:12. What does this tell us about the value of teamwork?
• How can you encourage teamwork among the children in your class?
• Pray: Lord, please help me motivate my students to work together in harmony by…
Lesson 7

Before the Lesson
- Collect items for the activities you plan to use, referring to the Classroom Supplies and Learning Lab Supplies listed in the chart.
- Make photocopies of the “Growing Together” handout (at the end of this lesson) to send home with your children.
- Pray for your students and for God’s direction in teaching the lesson.

This Lesson at a Glance

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Welcome

SUPPLIES: “Temple of God” name tags (p. 93), markers, scissors, tape or safety pins
• Greet each child individually with an enthusiastic smile.
• Thank each child for coming to class today.
• As children arrive, ask them about last week’s lesson and “Growing Together” activities. Use questions such as “How did you put God first last week?” and “How did you worship God with your family?”
• Say: Today we’re going to learn that God wants us to work together for him.
• Help children put on their name tags. If some children weren’t in class last week, or if some of the name tags were damaged, photocopy the “Temple of God” name tags and have children follow the instructions to create new name tags.
• Tell the children that the attention-getting signal you’ll use during this lesson is clapping your hands three times. Ask children to respond by clapping their hands three times as they stop talking and focus their attention on you. Rehearse the signal with the children, telling them to respond quickly so you have plenty of time for all the fun activities planned for this lesson.

Attention Grabber

■ Defend the Spider

SUPPLIES: paper

Wad up the spider web, put the spider on top of it, and place it in the center of the room. Place sheets of paper in a circle around the web. Space the papers so that children standing on them won’t be able to touch each other.

Form two teams: the Protectors and the Raiders. Have each Protector stand on one of the sheets of paper. Say: Protectors, your job is to protect the spider from the Raiders. You can use your arms, but your feet can’t move from the papers. The Raiders will try to steal the spider and bring it to me. Ready? Go!

It should be easy for the Raiders to steal the spider from the middle of the circle. When they do, congratulate them and ask them:
• What made it easy to steal the spider? (We could just walk in and grab it; the Protectors couldn’t keep us out of the circle.)
• What would have made it harder? (If the Protectors had been able to move from their papers; if they could have reached us.)

Ask the Protectors:
• What made it hard to protect the spider? (We couldn’t keep the Raiders out of the circle; we were too far apart.)
• What could we do to make it easier to keep the Raiders out of the circle? (We could stand closer together; we could move around the circle; we could join our arms together so the Raiders would have a tougher time getting through.)
Together choose one of the strategies the Protectors suggest. Then have them defend the spider from the Raiders. After 30 seconds or so, have the teams switch places. Have the new Protectors devise a new way to protect the spider. Have them work together to try their idea. Then put the spider, the web, and the sheets of paper away.

Ask: • Was it easier to protect the spider this time? Why or why not? (Easier, because we could work together; easier, because we stood closer together.)

• How did working together make the job easier? (When we were standing closer together, it made it harder to get by us; we formed a line that stopped the others from getting to the spider.)

Say: Today we’re going to talk about a group of people who had a problem like ours. They had a city to protect: Jerusalem. But the wall around the city had been torn down. It was a mess, and there were huge holes in it that would let enemies in. These people learned that God wants us to work together for him. Let’s find out how the people worked together to protect their city.

Bible Exploration & Application

**Building the Wall**

**SUPPLIES:** Bible, temple from Lesson 6, newspaper, tape, CD player

Have the children form a circle and sit about a foot apart from each other. Put the temple in the middle of the circle. Open your Bible to Nehemiah 3. Say: A man named Nehemiah went to Jerusalem to help the Jews rebuild the wall around the city and the finished Temple.

He rode around the city and found out exactly what needed to be done. Some parts of the old wall were still in good condition, but in places the wall had to be completely rebuilt. Let’s build our own wall.

Give each child some newspaper. Have each child wad up sheets of paper and tape them together to form a wall section that’s about 1 foot high, 1 foot deep, and 2 feet long. The children will attach their sections together later in the activity.

After two or three minutes of work, clap three times (even if the children haven’t finished) and wait for the children to stop working, clap their hands three times, and focus their attention on you. Say: While the people were busily working on the wall, they found out that it worked better if different people had different jobs. Some people started to work on the wooden parts of the gates and walls. Others repaired the stone parts of the walls. Let’s see how it works to divide up the jobs.

Appoint two or three children to tear off tape segments. Appoint several others to crumple newspaper. Have the rest of the children tape the wads together to continue building the sections of the wall that have already been started. Don’t let them join the sections together yet. If one group gets ahead or behind the rest, move kids from job to job to even out the tasks.

After two or three minutes, stop the work again by clapping your hands three times. Wait for children to respond, and then ask:

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**BIBLE POINT**

Nehemiah required each worker to build up the city wall behind or opposite that person’s own house. Each person could see the importance of the wall, and people were motivated to quickly and properly finish their sections. Nehemiah made all the workers feel as if the wall were their own. They worked together for God, the city, and personal satisfaction.
• Was it easier or harder to do the work after we split up the jobs? Explain. (It was easier because I didn’t always have to go find the tape; it was harder because I had to wait for newspaper wads and tape.)

• What is one job you could split up at home to make the work easier to do? (My sister and I could work together to keep our room picked up; I could help my mom put away groceries.)

Say: After the people were working on the wall, Nehemiah found out that enemies didn’t want the wall to be finished. They were ready to do anything to stop the work. So some of the people had to work as guards. They carried weapons and watched in case the enemies tried to start a fight. The enemies made fun of the workers and said that the wall would never hold. But Nehemiah and the other workers just kept on working. They worked from the time the sun rose in the morning until the stars came out at night.

Have the children resume their work on the wall, with each child doing the job he or she was assigned earlier. When the sections are 1 foot high, 1 foot deep, and 2 feet long, have the children join the sections together to form a wall around the temple.

Say: After only 52 days of hard work, the people finished the wall. The people had worked long hours, but they had worked together; and they had done a great thing. Jerusalem and the new Temple were now safe from enemy attacks. When all of the enemies and all of the other countries saw what the Jews had done, they were ashamed of themselves. The enemies saw that God had been with the Jews as they rebuilt the wall.

Ask: • How did working together help us build our wall? (It went more quickly to have people do different things; we were able to build a bigger wall together.)

• How did working together help the Jews build the wall? (It helped them get the job done more quickly; everyone did a little bit to help finish it.)

• When do you work with others? (In church; in school; at home.)

• What kinds of things do you do with others? (We cleaned up the playground, and that took a lot of people; I set the table every night with help from my sister.)

• How can you work together with others more? (I can offer to help others; I can work to get along with other people better.)

Say: Big projects are easier to accomplish when many people work together. If you had built this wall by yourself, it would have taken you much longer than it took with our whole class working on it. God wanted the Jews to work together to build a wall around Jerusalem. God wants us to work together for him.

Listen to what the Bible says. Today’s Bible verse is from Hebrews 10:24: ‘‘Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works.’’ When we motivate a person, that means we cheer that person on so he or she will be happy and excited to do something. So when we motivate one another to acts of love and good works, as our Bible verse says, we can cheer each other on to be loving and to do nice things for one another.

Play “Motivate One Another” (Hebrews 10:24) (track 7) from the CD. (Lyrics are at the back of this book.) Say: God wants us to motivate one another as we work together. Let’s try that now!

Return the CD to the Learning Lab box for future use.
HANDS-ON BIBLE

Children can do this activity at home with an adult, or you can assist them here in the classroom. Say: **We are learning today that God wants us to work together for him.** God tells us in the Bible that we should encourage one another to be nice to each other and work together. Let’s open our *Hands-On Bibles* to Hebrews 10:24, which is our Bible verse for today, and see what it says. I’ll read it out loud while you follow along: “Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works.” Continue: Good works are things that we do to help other people. That’s why they are good, because we are doing something nice for someone else.

Have the children get with a partner and turn to the back of their *Hands-On Bibles* and look up the word *work* in the Dictionary/Concordance. Have the pairs look up a few verses from the list and encourage them to work together to find the verses in the Bible. Then ask:

- **Why was it easier for you to work together looking up verses?** (Because Joseph can read better than I can; because together we could find something faster.)

- **Why does God want us to work together?** (Because it’s easier when you have help; so we can encourage each other.)

Have children share with their partner one way they can work together with someone at church, school, or home to do something nice for someone else. Then have them make a commitment to try it this week, with an adult’s help, and have them shake hands to reaffirm the commitment.

End in prayer, asking God to help children keep their commitments this week to work together with another person to do something nice for somebody.

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### Seeing Straight

**SUPPLIES:** large serving spoon

Have kids get into pairs and then form a line with the pairs facing you. Give one child the *kaleidoscope* to hold in one hand and the spoon in the other hand. Then place several of the *craft foam hearts* on the spoon.

Say: **We’re going to play a game where you and your partner have to walk across the room and back, balancing the hearts on your spoon.** Try not to drop any of the hearts. But here’s the catch. One of you has to hold the spoon in one hand and hold the *kaleidoscope* with the other hand as you look through it. Your partner will be there to help you. He or she can guide you so you walk straight. Along the way, he or she can pick up any hearts that fall off the spoon and put them back. But the person with the *kaleidoscope* must look through it all the way across the room. Decide who will be the looker and who will be the helper.

Play until each pair has had a turn.
Ask: • Was it easy or hard to look through the kaleidoscope and still keep the hearts on the spoon? Explain. (Hard, because I couldn’t see the spoon; easy, because my friend helped me.)

• Would it be easier or harder to do this alone? Why? (Harder, because I wouldn’t be able to see anything; easier, because I wouldn’t get bumped or pulled.)

• Why do you think God wants us to work together for him? (We can do more when there are two of us; so we can help each other.)

Say: ► God wants us to work together for him because he knows we can do so much more that way. Plus it’s a lot more fun!

Ask: • Why did the kaleidoscope make it harder for you to do your job? (Because I couldn’t see straight; I couldn’t see where I was going.)

Say: When you look through the kaleidoscope, your vision is goofy and you can’t see where you’re going. But your partner could see clearly where to go. Without your partner’s help, it would have been a lot harder to get the job done. And what does the Bible say about our working together? Let’s review today’s Bible verse. ► “Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works.”

Ask: • What’s one way you felt motivated to help your partner? (I wanted us not to drop any hearts; I wanted us to be fast and get to the finish line quickest.)

• How can we motivate our friends to do good works for God? (We can tell them not to be afraid to talk to people about God; we can remind them how important it is to do something good for God; we can pray for our friends.)

Say: ► God wants us to work together for him. Let’s try a job now to see how well we work together.

Bug Messages

SUPPLIES: Bible, paper, paper clips, treats, pencil, tape

Before class, hide treats somewhere in the room.

Designate a starting line on one side of the room and a finish line on the opposite side of the room. Give each child a sheet of paper and two paper clips. Show the children how to roll the paper lengthwise and clip it with the paper clips so that it doesn’t come unrolled. Roll the paper so the diameter is about as big as a half dollar.

While children are rolling up their papers, print the location of the treat on a small slip of paper, fold the paper as many times as you can, and tape it securely to a black insect.

Say: This bug has a message to deliver to a person at the finish line. To deliver the message, the bug must move from the starting line to the finish line through the paper rolls that you’ve just made. Let’s pretend that the floor is covered with water. We’re OK because we’re tall. But if the bug falls out of the paper rolls, it will drown before the message is delivered.

Let’s put the ends of the paper rolls together to form a pipeline. Will it reach all the way to the finish line? Let’s find out!

Have the children line up at the starting line and put their papers together to form a pipeline. Don’t tape the papers together; just have children hold the rolls in place. The pipeline probably won’t reach the finish line—that’s OK.
Put the bug in the pipeline and have the children shake it down to the last person in line. Then have the children think of ways to safely deliver the bug the rest of the way. Remind the children that the bug can’t leave the pipeline. If several children offer suggestions, have all the children vote for the one they think will work best.

If kids need help thinking of an idea, mention that the child at the starting line could move to the other end of the line to extend the pipeline. This process could be repeated until the pipeline and the bug reach the finish line.

When the bug reaches the finish line, have the person who delivered it there unfold the message and read it. Hand out the treats. Put away the bug and the paper rolls. While children are eating, ask:

• What was it like to work together to get the bug across the room? Was it fun or frustrating? Explain. (I thought it was fun because we all had good ideas; I thought it was hard because I didn’t know what to do.)

• Is it easy or hard to work together in real life? (Sometimes it’s easy because you like the person you’re working with; it’s easy if you agree, but it’s hard if you fight; sometimes it’s hard because you just want to do it by yourself.)

Say: Listen to the Bible. Be ready to tell me what will happen if we don’t give up. Read Galatians 6:9.

When we reap a harvest, that means that we do work and then something is produced from it, like planting seeds in a field and then watching the plants grow.

Ask: • What will happen if we don’t give up? (We’ll get a blessing; we’ll get a harvest.)

• What did we gain or harvest by working together to get the bug to the finish line? (We got treats; we felt good because we did a good job.)

• What would have happened if some people had gotten tired and had refused to extend the pipeline? (It would have been harder to get the bug to the end; it would have taken longer to get the treats.)

Say: God has a special job for each of us to do. God wants us to work together for him. When we do, we’ll accomplish more for him. And God wants us to motivate each other to keep working, too. Let’s review our Bible verse for today, Hebrews 10:24: “Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works.”

Ask: • What kinds of things might God want us to do together? (Tell other people about him; treat others with kindness; build things; sing songs; learn about God.)

• What are some ways we can motivate each other to work together? (Tell each other not to quit; encourage your friend to keep trying.)

Say: Thanks for those ideas of how to motivate one another and work together. God wants us to work together for him. When we do, we’ll accomplish important things for God. Let’s see why that works so well.
Three Strands

SUPPLIES: Bible, tape, yarn, CD player

Before class, cut three strands of yarn for each child.

During class, say: There’s something really amazing that you should know about working together. Listen while I read from the Bible. Read Ecclesiastes 4:9-12.

Hold up a single strand of yarn. Say: Suppose this is you by yourself. You can do a lot of great things by yourself.

Ask: • What can you do by yourself for God? (I can pray; I can sing; I can tell others about God.)

Hold up two strands and say: Now think of how much more you can do, how much more fun you can have, if you have a friend to work with.

Ask: • What can you do with a friend for God? (We can sing and pray together; we can tell even more people about God; we can do more kind things for others.)

Hold up three strands and say: Now imagine that there’s a third person and that the third person is Jesus. Think of all the things that three can do.

Ecclesiastes 4:12 means that when we work together, we can accomplish more things and we’ll be stronger, too. When we are friends with Jesus, we can do many things, and Jesus will give us the strength we need to do those things!

Give each child a single strand of yarn and have children try to break it. It might break but only after a lot of effort. Then hand out a second strand of yarn to each child, twist the two strands together, and have the children try to break that.

Hand out a third strand of yarn to each child. Have the children hold the pieces of yarn together and tape one end of the strands to a table so that the strands are lying on top of the table and the other ends are loose. Then have the children each separate the three strands, placing one strand straight out to the right, the middle strand straight down, and the third strand straight out to the left.

Show the children how to braid the strands. Say: Pick up the right strand and lay it over the middle strand. Then pick up the left strand and put it over the strand that’s in the middle. Keep putting the outside strands into the middle. Help each child as necessary until everyone has about a 1-inch section of braid. Tape or knot the ends of the braids. Then ask:

• Why is the braid you just made stronger than a single piece of yarn? (Because it’s thicker; because there are more pieces of yarn twisted together.)

• How is this braid like us when we work together with Jesus and others? (We’re stronger because we’re together; we won’t come apart easily.)
Say: Take these braids home as reminders to work with others to serve God. The more we work together, the more we can accomplish. And when we work together with Jesus, nothing is impossible!

Let’s not forget what our Bible verse for today tells us: “Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works.” We can help each other, and we’ll have fun, too. Let’s see how each of us can work with others to serve God.

Play “Motivate One Another” (Hebrews 10:24) (track 7) from the CD. Encourage the children to sing along if they can. You may wish to show them the lyrics, which can be found at the back of this teacher guide.

Close in prayer, thanking Jesus for his friendship and for helping us to work together for God. Put the CD away in the Learning Lab for future use.

Closing

Ability Combinations

SUPPLIES: Bible, water

Ask: • What are some things you remember about how God wants us to work together for him? (Working together is fun; God helps us when we work together; we can do good things for God when we work together.)

Put a few drops of water in each color of the paint set and let the paint soften. Swirl the paints with the paintbrushes so that a lot of the pigment is dissolved in the water.

Have the children form a circle. Using different colors for different children, brush a circle of paint on each child’s hand. Have the children blow on their hands so that the paint dries. (The paint will wash off easily with soap and water.) It’s OK if some children have the same color as others.

Say: Listen while I read about what we can do when we work together. Read Ephesians 4:12-13.

Think of a talent you have that you could use to serve God. For example, maybe you’re good at putting on puppet shows, or maybe you sing well, or maybe you can draw well. Have each child mention his or her ability. Be ready to mention ideas if the children have trouble thinking of their talents and abilities.

God wants us to work together for him. Let’s see what happens when we combine our gifts to work together for him. I’ll call out colors. If I call the color on your hand, run to the middle of the circle and link arms with whoever else is there. Then we’ll see what happens when we put your gifts together.

Call out two colors—red and blue, for example. Have the children with red and blue spots on their hands rush to the center of the circle, link arms, and mention their gifts. Then have the class think of at least one way to combine their talents to work together for God. Encourage the children to think of fun, unusual, and imaginative ideas. For example, Ashley and Ryan might come forward. Ashley rides horses, and Ryan paints pictures. They could decide to have an art show on horseback in a parade that tells others about God’s love.
Continue to call out colors until everyone has been to the center of the circle at least once. Then have the children sit in a circle. As you shake each child’s hand, complete this sentence: [Child’s name], God has given you a great gift. You are a special person with special abilities. Use your gifts this week to work together with others for God.

Then pray: God, thank you for all of the gifts you give us. And thank you for the opportunity to share them with one another and to work together for you. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Have the children wash the paint off their hands before leaving class for the day.
Today your child learned that working together for God accomplishes great things, and it’s fun, too. The children learned that God gives every follower special gifts and abilities to use to make the kingdom of God stronger. Use these ideas at home to teach your child how to have fun working with others.

**Popcorn Treats**

Have your family work together to make this sweet treat. Have someone pop popcorn; you’ll need 6 quarts of popped corn. Have an adult mix 1 cup of corn syrup in a pan with a 3-ounce package of your favorite flavored gelatin and a cup of sugar and cook the mixture on the stove until the sugar melts. Cool the syrup until it’s barely comfortable to the touch, and then pour it over the popcorn. Work together to form the popcorn into balls. Put the balls on wax paper. Enjoy the treat together.

**Solid Wall**

With your child, collect 1-inch rocks. Place the rocks on a piece of plywood. Then mix a small amount of plaster of Paris and water in a plastic bucket according to the directions on the package. Quickly spread plaster on the rocks and build a vertical wall with them, using the plaster as a mortar. Work quickly so the plaster doesn’t set before your wall is finished. Then read about Nehemiah’s directing the work to rebuild the wall around Jerusalem in Nehemiah 3:1–4:23 and 6:1-15. Talk about the cooperation that was required to build both walls.

**All Together**

Have all the members of your family hold hands as you take a walk through a park. Then read Ephesians 4:16. Talk about what it means to fit together perfectly. Have everyone join hands again and have each person try to lead the family in a different direction. After a minute or two of struggle, sit down and talk about the need for common goals when you work together. Write a list of goals that your family can work toward. For example, you might set a goal of keeping the family room tidy for a week.

**Dependence**

Learn what it means to depend on each other. Have two family members sit about 18 inches apart with their backs toward each other; then have them lean back so their backs are touching. Have them relax completely so that all their weight is supported by the other person. Ask what would happen if one of the partners suddenly got up. Talk about how important it is to be able to depend on each other when you work together.

_Ezra and Nehemiah 7: God wants us to work together for him._

_Bible Verse_  
“Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works”  
(Hebrews 10:24).

_Bible Story_  
Nehemiah rebuilds the wall.  