Bible Focus: Nehemiah 5:1-13

Discovery Point: God can help us help the poor.

Worship Response: Children will create a plan to help the poor.

Key Verse: “Whoever gives to the poor will lack nothing, but those who close their eyes to poverty will be cursed” (Proverbs 28:27).

A Look at the Session
Mix and match to meet your needs. For more ideas, see “For-Extra-Time Activities” on page 106.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session Sequence</th>
<th>What Kids Will Do</th>
<th>Supplies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Welcome! (up to 10 minutes)</td>
<td>Make a grocery-bag ball, and play with it as they discuss their own favorite belongings.</td>
<td>Putting God First: Serving CD or DVD, CD player or TV/DVD player, 1 paper bag per crew, at least 5 plastic grocery bags per crew</td>
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<tr>
<td>Let’s Explore! (up to 30 minutes)</td>
<td>Discover how Nehemiah helped the poor, read about current issues facing the poor, and develop a campaign to help the poor this week.</td>
<td>Hands-On Bibles, newspapers and/or news magazines, information pages on ministries to the poor, construction paper, markers, tape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Let’s Praise! (up to 10 minutes)</td>
<td>Praise God for his great love for us that we can share with others.</td>
<td>Putting God First: Serving CD or DVD, CD player or TV/DVD player</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Let’s Pray! (up to 10 minutes)</td>
<td>Realize we need God’s strength to help the poor, and pray for friends to seek God’s help.</td>
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</tbody>
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Before This Session

☐ Call local organizations that help the poor, and prepare an information sheet about each organization and what kids can do to help meet its needs. Photocopy the information sheets so you have one of each for each crew.

☐ Assemble Bible Exploration Kits (one per four kids): one Hands-On Bible, one paper grocery bag and at least five plastic grocery bags, newspaper and/or news magazine, construction paper, markers, and tape.

☐ Review the “HELP...” activity next to Nehemiah 5 in the Hands-On Bible.

☐ CD/DVD Cue the Putting God First: Serving CD (1) or DVD (1).

☐ Huddle briefly with volunteers before the session. Answer questions they have. Encourage them, and pray for the session, the volunteers, and the kids.
Welcome!

Supplies: assembled Bible Exploration Kits
(see page 99) | CD player or TV/DVD player

1. Play “Into the Bible” (1) as kids arrive.

2. Have kids form Bible Crews of four, and SAY: Welcome! I’m so glad you’re here because we have a very interesting and active lesson ahead of us today. First, make sure everyone knows everyone else in your Bible Crew. Then take the paper and plastic grocery bags from your Bible Exploration Kit. Crumple the paper bag, and put it inside a plastic bag. Roll the plastic bag into a ball, and put it inside another plastic bag. You want to make it as compact and round as possible. Continue until you’ve used all your plastic bags, and then tuck the last bag’s ends in so you’ve got a ball.
3. When each crew has made a ball, borrow one and hold it up. SAY:
In some places around the world, a ball like this might be the
only toy in a village, shared by all the village’s children. Now
sit in a circle and take turns tossing your ball around. Each time
you hold the ball, share with your crew one thing in your house
you’d miss if you couldn’t have it anymore. Make sure each
person gets the ball before anyone gets it twice. Go!

4. After a few minutes, ASK:
• On a scale of 1 to 10, how attached are you to the things in
  your home and why?
• How would you feel if you woke up tomorrow and learned you
  had to give up everything in your home? Explain.
• What do you think it would be like to be poor?

5. SAY: Even if some of us feel poor sometimes, we still probably
have more than enough. GOD CAN HELP US HELP THE POOR,
and we’re going to find out more about how we can do that now.

Let’s Explore!

Supplies: assembled Bible Exploration Kits
(see page 99) | information sheets (see page 99)

1. SAY: GOD CAN HELP US HELP THE POOR just as he helped
Nehemiah help the poor. Let’s take a look at that story. Have
Bible Crews take the Hands-On Bibles out of their kits. Help them

Read about how Nehemiah helped others. Then read it a second
time through, stopping each time the people complain. Put their
complaint in your own words to make sure everyone on your
crew understands what the people said about why they were
poor. Then come up with a body posture that involves everyone
in your crew to represent the reason for their poverty. Your
posture can have everyone doing the same thing, or you can
put your bodies together to create a scene. For example, if they
were poor because they lost their credit cards, you can pretend
to swipe a credit card.

SIMPLE STRATEGY

Your church may work
with a local organization
(or two or three). If
so, definitely funnel
children’s energy and
efforts that direction.
Young people feel more
connected to the larger
church body when they
contribute to a mission
to which your church is
already committed. Be
sure to check whether the
organization has a helpful
website. If so, provide
children with web access,
if possible, so they can
see the ministry for
themselves.

This activity will take
extra work on your part.
Making the phone calls,
typing the lists, even
finding extra adults
willing to roll with this
hands-on activity today
and to its completion
all takes prep. However,
the activity could be a
powerful one that kids
remember years from now.
This could be the day
they develop an activist’s
compassionate heart.
2. Give crews eight minutes to read, discuss, and come up with poses. Let each crew answer the first question by demonstrating one of its poses.

**ASK:**
- Why were the people poor?
- How did Nehemiah help them?
- Why are people poor today? What could you do to help them?

3. Have Bible Crews take the newspapers and magazines from their kits, and instruct them to find headlines, pictures, and stories related to those who are poor. They might find a story about people losing their homes to foreclosure, a relief agency at work somewhere in the world, or the state of schools in poor neighborhoods. **SAY:** As you find stories about those who are poor, discuss these questions:

**ASK:**
- What do you think Nehemiah might have done to help the people in these situations?
- What would you like to do to help them?

4. Have kids find the “HELP…” activity in their Hands-On Bibles. Instruct crews to read the instructions. When they’re done, **SAY:** Let’s get on that right now! I made some phone calls earlier this week to local groups that work with the poor, and I’ll pass out sheets with information they told me about what kids can contribute to help with their needs.
5. When crews have read the information sheets, ask them to discuss these questions:
   - What can each one of us do this week to help meet these needs? For example, we can each donate two cans of nonperishable food from our pantry or something from our rooms. Be as specific as possible!
   - Why is it so important to help the poor?
   - How can God help us help the poor?

6. SAY: Create a campaign to help this organization. Think creatively about what you can and are willing to do this week. You can use the construction paper, markers, and tape from your kit to make a sign for your “donation area” or a motivational poster to encourage you and others to have a giving heart. Then prepare a brief presentation for the class to explain your campaign and how you plan to participate in meeting the organization’s needs.

7. When crews have prepared and presented their campaigns, SAY: I hope you’re having a great time today learning about the difference you can make in someone else’s life! ☝️ GOD CAN HELP US HELP THE POOR.
Let’s Praise!

**Supplies:** CD player or TV/DVD player

1. **SAY:** 🌟 GOD WANTS TO HELP US HELP THE POOR because he loves each one of us so much, rich or poor. As we sing, cross your arms over your chest in a sign of love to remember that God loves us and wants us to help others because of his great love.

2. **PLAY:** 🎵 CD/DVD
   - “Get Up!” (Romans 12:11) (4)
   - “Go and Make Disciples” (Matthew 28:19) (6)
   - “Servant of All” (Mark 9:35b) (7)

Let’s Pray!

**Supplies:** none

1. **SAY:** On the count of three, tighten up every muscle in your body and hold it. Ready? One, two, three, flex! Pause for 10 seconds. OK, relax. Sometimes we feel very strong and capable, and we probably are. But people rely on themselves more than they need to when God is always ready to help us with strength beyond anything we can imagine. 🌟 GOD CAN HELP US HELP THE POOR, but we need to remember to ask God for his help and not just charge in with our own strength.

2. Ask Bible Crews to sit in a circle. SAY: Clench your right hand into a fist. Put your left hand open, palm up, on your knee. Now put your right fist into the left palm of the person sitting next to you. Pray silently that the person whose fist you’re holding will remember to ask for God’s strength and help to help others around them.
High Fives

Supplies: none

SAY: As you leave, ask three people what they’ll bring next week to donate to the poor. Say, “Way to let God help you help the poor!” as you give each person a high fist pound.
For-Extra-Time Activities

**CANDY GIVE-AWAY**

**Supplies:** small wrapped candies in a bowl for each Bible Crew

Give each Bible Crew a bowl of candies, and invite children to take up to a handful each. After they’ve taken their candies, ask kids to count how many they have. Challenge them to tell their crews that same number of items from their rooms that they can give to the poor this week.

**REMEMBER US**

**Supplies:** newspapers | news magazines | scissors | poster board | markers | glue sticks

Have kids create a poster to display in your meeting space that will remind them that God can help us help the poor.

**CREATE A BIBLE DICTIONARY**

**Supplies:** paper | markers | dictionary

Ask kids to create one or more new pages, each with a new word, for the Bible Dictionary. Ask for ideas of new words from today’s session—poor and mortgage are two suggestions. Have them write the word on a sheet of paper in fun letters, add a definition, list Scripture references, and make illustrations. Add each page to a three-ring binder, and watch the dictionary grow!

**THE BOOKS OF THE BIBLE**

**Supplies:** CD player

Ask kids to read the intro page for any book of the Bible and create a motion for that book. For example, kids could make a motion for rain for Genesis or do a beauty pageant wave for Esther. Play “The Books of the Bible Song” (8), and have kids do all the motions they have learned.

**HIDING IT IN YOUR HEART**

**Supplies:** store catalogs or circulars

Give each Bible Crew a store catalog or circular and a Hands-On Bible. Have them find the Key Verse, Proverbs 28:27, and read it aloud. Instruct kids to look through the circular and find items similar to things they own that they could give away this week. Ask them to explain why they would like to give those items to the poor.

**FOCUS**

See page 15.
Help...

The poor in Israel were in deep trouble. Nehemiah could have just stood by and watched, but he didn’t!

Check out Nehemiah 5:1-13 to see what he did.

Pass the envelope around as everyone in your family takes turns praying for the poor. Then give the money to a charity that will help a poor family.

FAMILY CHALLENGE

What do you think it would be like to be so poor you never got treats like ice cream?

How do you think your money could help a poor family?

How will you get the money to a poor family?

How can you pray for the poor family that will get the money?

There are lots of ways you can help! Here’s one!

There are lots of ways you can help! Here’s one!

Work...with an adult to find an organization that helps the poor.

Call...the organization to see what kind of stuff you have that it needs.

Look...in your room for stuff to give away.

Load...a box (or two or three).

Drop...the box off at the organization you called.

After you drop your box off at the charity or at your church, celebrate by driving past your favorite ice-cream store and not stopping. Put the money you would have spent in an envelope. When you get home, talk over these questions as the sealed envelope sits on the table in front of you:

1. *Work*...with an adult to find an organization that helps the poor.
2. *Call*...the organization to see what kind of stuff you have that it needs.
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