Nehemiah Helps Build Walls

Bible Story
Nehemiah 1—2; 4:1-6; 6:15-16; 12:27,43

Teacher Challenge
Nehemiah seemed to have all the advantages possible. With an important position in the royal court, he was well taken care of. When his brother visited and told him about Jerusalem’s destruction, Nehemiah could have said, “Look, God has blessed me here. Jerusalem is a long way away. I’m sorry, but the wall isn’t my problem!” However, the splendor of the royal court had not seduced Nehemiah. He could not forget the needs of his people and his family in Jerusalem, no matter how good things were for him.

What in your life lures you away from doing what you need to do?
What has God done through you to help build His kingdom?

People all around you have needs you can meet, especially in your classroom of young children. Share the love of God with them and help them know Him. Pray for gentleness and wisdom from God who knows what they need and knows your heart and desires. He will give you what you need to keep on faithfully expressing God’s love in every great and small matter.

Teacher’s Planning
1. Choose which centers you will provide and the order in which children will participate in them. For tips on schedule planning, see page 9.

2. Plan who will lead each center, making sure to have one adult for approximately every six children. For staffing tips and ideas, see page 12.

God’s Word
“With love, help each other.”
(See Galatians 5:13.)

God’s Word and Me
I can show love by helping others.
Active Game Center: Numbered Walls

Collect
Bible, index cards, marker, connecting blocks (Lego, Duplo, etc.).

Prepare
Number cards one to four, repeating numbers to make a total of eight cards.

Do
1. Place blocks at one side of an open area. Children line up by blocks. Place index cards facedown in a stack by children.
2. Children take turns choosing a card and selecting that number of blocks written on the card. Children take the blocks across the room and either start building or adding to a block wall.

Talk About
- The Bible says, “With love, help each other.” We can show love by helping others. Let’s help each other build a wall.
- It is fun to help our friends. Who else can we help? (Parents, brothers, sisters, teachers.)
- God helps us love other people. Pray, Dear God, please help us to show love and help others.

For Younger Children
If you have a large class, set up more than one game so children don’t have to wait long for a turn.

For Older Children
As each child takes a turn, lead group in counting the total number of blocks in the wall.

God’s Word
“With love, help each other.” (See Galatians 5:13.)

God’s Word and Me
I can show love by helping others.
Art Center: Building the Wall Together

Collect
Bible, construction paper, scissors, ruler, masking tape, butcher paper, markers, glue.

Prepare
Cut construction paper into rectangles with sides at least 4 inches (10 cm) long. Tape butcher paper to table.

Do
1. Each child selects one or more construction-paper rectangles and uses markers to decorate rectangle(s).
2. Children glue rectangles to butcher paper to make a wall mural. Display mural on classroom or hallway wall.

Talk About
In our Bible story today, Nehemiah and his friends rebuilt Jerusalem’s broken walls. Let’s help each other make a paper wall!

Building the wall was hard work for Nehemiah and the people in Jerusalem. Some jobs seem hard because we don’t want to do them. What is a job you or someone you know doesn’t like to do? (Make the bed. Pick up toys. Feed the dog.)

Jobs that are hard to do can be fun when we help each other! What is a job the people in your family help each other to do? (Wash the car. Bake cookies.)

The Bible says, “With love, help each other.” Pray briefly, Dear God, help us obey You and show love by helping others.

For Younger Children
Be ready to help children position rectangles on butcher paper.

For Older Children
Provide rectangles, triangles and squares for children to use in building paper walls.
Play to Learn

Block Center:
Building Together

Collect
Bible, masking tape, marker, blocks, toy construction tools, toy people.

Prepare
With masking tape, outline an area on the floor to build a wall or walls. Use marker to divide masking tape into sections, one section for each child. (Note: Remove masking tape immediately after activity.)

Do
1. Children choose a section of the masking-tape outline and build their section of the wall using toy construction tools.
2. Children use toy people to carry on conversations about how the building is going, asking if someone needs help, stopping for a water break, etc.

Talk About
- In today’s Bible story, Nehemiah and his friends rebuilt the walls of their city. Let’s pretend these toy people are helping each other rebuild the city wall.
- The Bible says, “With love, help each other.” We can show God’s love by helping others.
- Madison, what jobs do you have at your house? Is your job easier or harder when someone helps you?
- We show love to others when we help them. Daniel, how could you help your friend Aaron when you play at his house? (Help pick up toys. Obey Aaron’s mom.)

For Younger Children
Children build constructions of their own choice. Encourage children to help each other.

For Older Children
Provide small cardboard boxes or baskets for children to use in carrying blocks from one section of the wall to another.
Play to Learn

Science Center: Helping Plant

Collect
Bible, newspaper, small plastic flower pots or plastic cups, soil, plastic spoons, flower seedlings.

Prepare
Cover work area with newspaper.

Do
1. Children use spoons to fill cup half way with soil.
2. Children place flower seedling in cup and cover roots with soil, pressing soil lightly around roots. Children name the person they will give their plant to.

Talk About
- The Bible says, “With love, help each other.” We can show love by making gifts for others. Let’s plant these flowers to give as a gift.
- Stacy, you helped Mikey clean up his spilled soil. Thank you for being a helper! What is one way you can help the people in your family when the house needs cleaning? (Pick up my toys. Throw trash away. Make my bed.)
- Pray briefly, Thank You, God, for friends and family we can help.

For Younger Children
Assist children in placing seedling in cup so the roots are not damaged.

For Older Children
Provide construction paper and markers for children to make a gift card to go with their plant.
Listen to Learn
Nehemiah 1—2; 4:1-6; 6:15-16; 12:27,43

Collect
Bible, Bible Story 20 pictures from God’s Story for Me Poster Pack #1, Preschool Music #1 CD and player, large sheet of paper, marker, block or beanbag.

Prepare
On a large sheet of paper, print the words “People I Can Help.”

Greet Each Other
To help children welcome each other, lead children in doing the motions and saying these words or singing words to the tune of “Where Is Thumbkin?”

Where is (Noah)? Where is (Noah)? (Shade eyes with one hand and look around circle.)
Here he is. Here he is. (Point to Noah.)
We are glad to see you. (Hold hands to make circle around eyes like glasses.)
We are glad to see you.
Hello to you! Hello to you! (Wave to Noah.)

Continue around the circle, welcoming each child.

Tell the Story
Open your Bible to Nehemiah 1. Tell the story using the pictured motions (keywords in bold) or show Bible Story 20 pictures.

When you feel sad, what makes you feel better? Listen to find out what made a man named Nehemiah feel sad.

Nehemiah was a special helper to the king. He lived in a country far from his real home. One day, Nehemiah’s brother came and told Nehemiah sad news. “The city where we used to live had strong walls. Now they are broken. The city is not safe.”

Nehemiah was sad. So Nehemiah did something very important. He prayed to God. He knew God would hear his prayer.

When the king saw Nehemiah, he asked, “Why are you so sad, my friend?”

Nehemiah said, “I am sad because the wall around my city is broken down. I would like to go and help the people build the wall again.”

The king said, “You may go and help the people build the wall. Come back when it is finished.” Nehemiah was very happy. He thanked the king and started off to the city.

When Nehemiah came to the city, he said to all the people, “We can build the wall. We can make it strong again. Who will help?”

“My family will help,” said a father. “We will cut some stones.”

“My family will help,” said another father. “We will cut down trees to make the gates.”

For many days, the people worked together and helped each other. Finally the wall was finished. Everyone was glad that the city was safe again. And Nehemiah was glad God had heard his prayer.

Talk About the Story
What did Nehemiah help people do? (Rebuild the city wall.) Nehemiah and the people all worked together and helped each other. We can help others and show that we love them. Who can you help at home? What can you help your mom do in the morning?

Sing to God
Let’s sing about the way God loves us and wants us to love others. Lead children in singing “Love Is” (track 13 on CD). God wants us to help the people in our families, our friends and everyone!

Hear and Say God’s Word
Holding your Bible open to Galatians 5:13, say verse aloud. Helping someone with love means to help in a kind way. We show God’s love when we help others. Lead children in saying the verse. First the boys stand and say “With love” and then the girls stand and say “Help each other.” Children sit down when the other group stands. Have children repeat the verse in this manner several times, alternating which group says the phrases.

Option: To make the Bible verse activity more challenging for older children, ask them to repeat verse and replace the words “each other” with another child’s name. The named child then repeats verse, using a different child’s name. Continue until each child has had a turn.

Pray to God
Children repeat the following prayer after you, one phrase at a time: Dear God, . . . thank You for loving us. . . . Please help us show love . . . by helping others. . . . In Jesus’ name, amen.

Praise to God
Children sit in a circle. Pass a block or beanbag around the circle while you play “Are You Ready?” (track 15 on CD). When the music stops, child holding block or beanbag names people other than family members whom they could help (friends, teacher, sister, brother, baby-sitter, etc.). Challenge older children to name the ways they will help those people. Print children’s responses on prepared paper and post where parents can read it when children are dismissed.
Talk to Learn

Bible Story Activity Pages Center

Collect
A copy of Activity 20 from *The Big Book of Bible Story Activity Pages* #1 and an 8-inch (20.5-cm) length of string for yourself and each child, crayons or markers, scissors, tape; optional—small sand-paper squares, glue.

Do
Lead children to complete pages following the instructions. (Optional: Children glue sandpaper squares to wall.) Use the conversation suggestions as children complete their pages and retell the story.

Preschool Puzzle Center

Collect
Copies of Puzzles 103 and 104 (p. 213 and p. 215 from *The Big Book of Kindergarten Puzzles*) for each child; pencils, crayons or markers.

Do
Children complete the puzzles and color pages. Use the conversation suggestions on the pages.

Read-Aloud Story Center

Collect
A copy of Story Picture 52 from *The Big Book of Read-Aloud Stories* #1 for yourself and each child, crayons or markers.

Do
Read the story and distribute pictures. Use the conversation suggestions as children complete their pages.