

Lesson 10 Nehemiah Rebuilds Jerusalem's Walls

Before Class

Bible Story Text—Nehemiah 1, 2, 4, 6

Lesson Aims

1. To tell the story of Nehemiah's leading the rebuilding of Jerusalem's walls.
2. To help children see the importance of teamwork in accomplishing difficult and worthwhile tasks.
3. To help the students resolve, like Nehemiah and the people, to "have a mind to work."
4. To help children determine not to give up when the going gets rough.

Memory Verse

Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might. Ecclesiastes 9:10

Inspiration for the Teacher

What springs to your mind when you think of a person God can use to build His church? Maybe you think of someone like John the Baptist or Menno Simons or your pastor. Today God's church is spiritually thwarted by "Sanballat and Tobiah" guerrilla attacks. Can God use you to help build it?

Like you, Nehemiah was just an ordinary person. He was not the obvious candidate for his ministry. He was not clamoring for clout with a list of goals and objectives. But he sought to relate God to everyday life, and to serve faithfully. God through Nehemiah accomplished the "impossible" mission of rebuilding and bringing a spiritual awakening among the people of Judah.

Scripture Readings: Romans 12:5; 1 Corinthians 1:10; 3:9; Philippians 2:2; 1 Peter 2:5

Supplies You Will Need

- Colored pencils
- A sharpened pencil with eraser for each child

Optional Supplies

- Photocopied Optional Worksheet for each child from page 92 if you decide to use it
- Some pictures of city ruins (suggestions: aftermath of a recent hurricane, earthquake, or tornado), if you use Optional Lesson Introduction #1
- Some Lego™ blocks, if you use Optional Lesson Introduction #2
- Blindfolds for each student, if you use the Teamwork Practice from page 81 of this manual
- Items for the Scientific Demonstration if you decide to use it (see page 81)

Teaching Lesson 10

Praise and Worship God

Optional Lesson Introductions

1. Show the class a picture of a city ruined by war or some natural disaster. Ask students how it would make them feel if that had been their hometown or community, especially if they had been away when it happened.
2. Tell the class that you are going to divide them into two groups. Then you will give each group some Lego™ blocks. Tell them they'll have three minutes to see who can build the best and the biggest wall. Put only one person in the first "group" and all the others in the second group. At the end of three minutes, it should be obvious that a team of people working together can accomplish much more than a person working alone.

The Bible Story

Lesson Background

Nebuchadnezzar had left Jerusalem in ruins. The splendid temple was stripped and burned, and the homes of the rich lay in ashes. With his battering rams, he had broken the city walls down. Most of the people were taken captive to Babylon. Only scattered families were left in the countryside to keep up vineyards and farms. And so for seventy years the city lay as it had fallen.

After seventy years, fifty thousand Jews returned to Jerusalem by the permission of Cyrus. They began rebuilding the temple. Spirits rose. Hope returned to the land. But the hope and gladness was short-lived. Discouragement from within and opposition from without caused the work to lag for twenty more years before it was finished.

But even then, what was a temple without a city? When would there be a city again? Could the strength and security of Jerusalem's walls be rebuilt?



Nehemiah was a Jewish man who served as a cupbearer for Artaxerxes, the Persian king. One day the king reached for the wine brought to him by his trusted servant. "Nehemiah, you look sad today," the king observed. "Why is this? You are not sick."

"Long live the king," Nehemiah began.

"Why shouldn't I be sad? I have heard sad news from my homeland. My beloved city Jerusalem lies in ruins. The walls are broken down, and the gates burnt."

"What would you like to do about it?" the king asked.

This was his chance! Nehemiah sent a quick prayer heavenward before he answered. "If it please the king, I ask that you would send me to Jerusalem to rebuild the city."

God's blessing was on Nehemiah. After discussing how long Nehemiah would be gone, the king and queen granted his request to return to Jerusalem.

Artaxerxes also sent an escort along for the journey and donated a supply of lumber.

When Nehemiah arrived in Jerusalem, he told no one why he was there. He wanted to scout the ruined city for himself first. He made his first investigation of

the broken-down walls at night, riding on a donkey.

Then he called the leaders of the Jews together. "You see the distress we are in," he said. "You see how the city wall lies in ruins and ashes. Let's rebuild the walls! Then we will no longer be a disgrace."

When the Jews at Jerusalem heard how God and the king had blessed Nehemiah's plan, they were eager to help. Everyone made preparations for the big job.






Nehemiah organized his workers into groups. Then he assigned each group to build a section of the wall. The people had made up their minds to work, and shouts and sounds of tools filled the air as the building began. Day after day they fitted into place the huge blocks that had been strewn about, and the walls began to take shape.

But not everyone was happy that the



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Class Discussion


-  Note: Discuss the responsibility Nehemiah had as cupbearer.
-  Why was Nehemiah concerned about Jerusalem?
-  What was the purpose of city walls?
-  How did Sanballat and Tobiah try to stop the work?
-  How did Nehemiah help the work?

Workbook Activities

Learn the Memory Verse

Illustrate this verse in the following way: Stand in a circle. Recite the verse. When you say "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do," everyone holds out a hand, palm up. When you say "do it with thy might," make a hammering motion.

Talk about the meaning of the verse.

 Are you a good worker?

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walls of Jerusalem were being rebuilt. Sanballat and Tobiah were two of the Jews' enemies. When they heard what was happening, they set out to stop the work. They tried laughing at the Jews. "Your wall is so flimsy that if a fox ran along the top it would fall over," jeered Tobiah.

The Jews didn't let this ridicule stop them, so Sanballat and Tobiah put their heads together and made a plan. They would ambush the workers on the wall and kill them.

Someone warned Nehemiah, and the Jews prepared for an attack. "Do not be afraid," Nehemiah told them. "God will fight for you." When the enemies saw that God was

working against them, they gave up their plans, and the Jews went back to work.

But Nehemiah didn't trust his enemies. From then on, half of the workers kept watch and had their weapons ready, while the other half worked on the wall. All the builders kept their swords at their sides. At night they slept in their clothes to be ready to respond to an attack.

Sanballat and Tobiah tried every trick and lie they could think of to get Nehemiah to stop building the wall. But the Jews finished the wall in fifty-two days. Everyone, even their enemies, knew that their work had been blessed by God. Jerusalem was once again a safe, protected city.



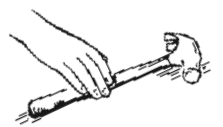
Bible Memory

Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might. Ecclesiastes 9:10

Copy the verse on the lines below to help you learn the meaning.



Whatsoever



thy hand
findeth to do,

do it
with
thy might.



Ecclesiastes 9:10

Suggestion for drilling the verse:

Have the boys recite the first half of the verse, and the girls the second half. Do this a number of times, then switch the boys and the girls.

Remember This

Do this exercise together as a class, following the suggestion for orally correcting the false statements.

A Mind to Work

When the students have finished this exercise, have someone read the message.

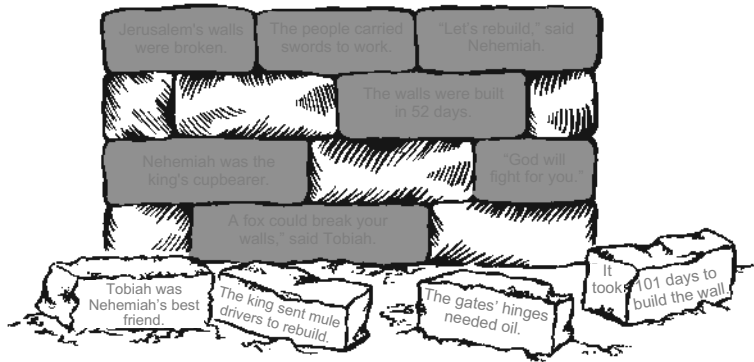
Map It

Have the students do the map exercise in their work-books.

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? **Remember This**

Color the blocks that give true statements that are a part of your story. Decide with your class how you could correct the false statements.



 **A Mind to Work**

Only 52 days to build a wall several miles long! How could the Jews do it? Part of the answer is in Nehemiah 4:6.

Cross out every X, Y, and Z. Write the remaining letters on the lines.

T	X	H	X	E	P	E	X	O	X	P	L	E
X	X	H	A	Y	D	Z	A	X	M	I	N	D
Z	T	Y	X	O	W	Z	O	Y	R	X	K	X

T H E P E O P L E A
M I N D T O W O R K

 **Map It**

Turn to pages 62 and 63. Do the map work for Lesson 10.


- Nehemiah lived in the same city as Esther. Write his name beside the wine goblet to remind you that he was the king's cupbearer. Color the cup.

Application Exercise


Teamwork

Get the class started on this exercise, then encourage them to think of their own answers.

When everyone is finished, they may share their ideas with each other.

 Have you ever been part of a team working together?

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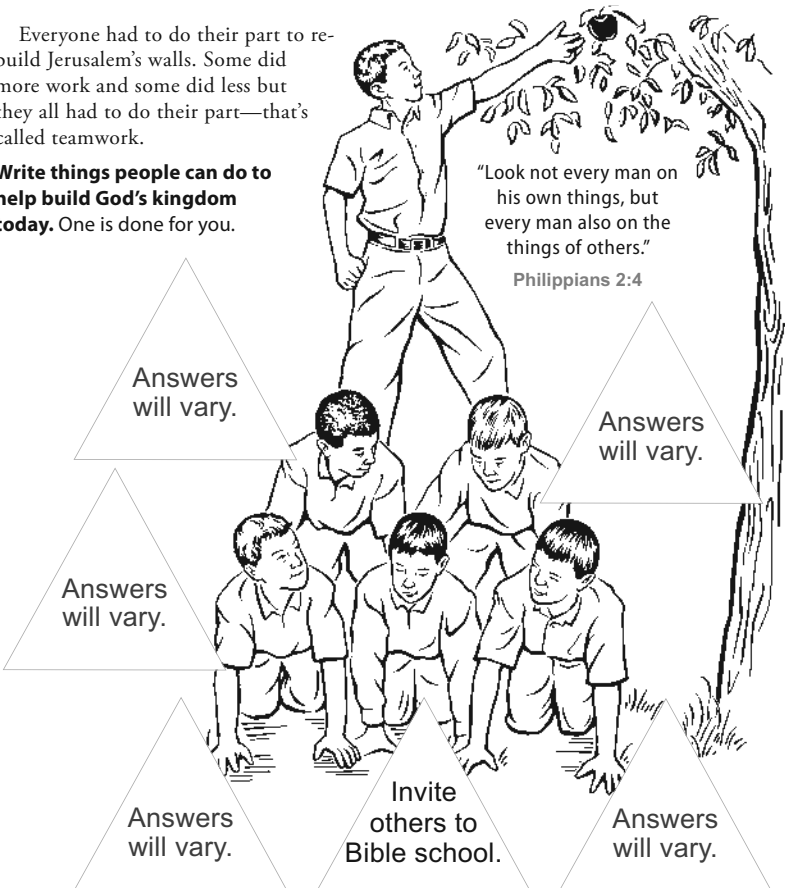


Teamwork

Everyone had to do their part to rebuild Jerusalem's walls. Some did more work and some did less but they all had to do their part—that's called teamwork.

Write things people can do to help build God's kingdom today. One is done for you.

"Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others."
Philippians 2:4



Answers will vary.

Answers will vary.

Answers will vary.

Invite others to Bible school.

Answers will vary.

What would happen if you removed any one of these team members?
No one could reach the apple.

* For more activities on Lesson 10, turn to pages 60–61.

This is the end of the basic lesson.

- If you are teaching a five-day Bible school or have limited time for extras, omit the extra activities suggested at the bottom of page 41 in the student workbook.
- Pages 80-81 in this manual list additional, non-workbook activities.

Extra Activity 1

Page 60

Lowly Workers

Read the introductory paragraph. Keep the class together as they complete the exercise. When it is finished, have someone read the verse at the end of the page, and discuss its meaning.

Lesson 10, Extra Activity 1



Lowly Workers

Nehemiah and the people working on the wall had to be willing to do some hard, dirty, and sometimes dangerous jobs. God is pleased when we pitch in even if our part of the work is not very exciting. He likes when people are willing to do the lowly jobs too.

Follow the instructions to complete a Bible verse about God's pleasure in lowly people.

1. If Nehemiah was a humble cupbearer to the king, put a **W** in blank **36**.
If Nehemiah was second in command to the king, put an **R** in blank **36**.
2. If Nehemiah himself led a team of workers to Jerusalem, put a **P** in blank **25**.
If Nehemiah remained behind in Jerusalem while others went off to work, put a **T** in blank **25**.
3. If Nehemiah rebuilt the city using his own wealth, put an **S** in blanks **15** and **38**.
If Nehemiah rebuilt with supplies donated by the king, put a **Y** in blanks **15** and **38**.
4. If Nehemiah scouted the city ruins on a donkey, put a **U** in blanks **4** and **28**.
If Nehemiah proudly rode through the streets on a horse, put an **O** in blanks **4** and **28**.
5. If Nehemiah put slaves to labor on the walls, put an **A** in blanks **11** and **23**.
If Nehemiah himself led a team of re-builders, put an **R** in blanks **11** and **23**.
6. If the people were eager to help, put an **L** in blanks **9, 34,** and **37**.
If the workers grumbled and complained, put a **D** in blanks **9, 34,** and **37**.
7. If the workers gave up when their enemies mocked them, put an **A** in blanks **3, 10, 30,** and **35**.
If the people worked despite being mocked, put an **O** in blanks **3, 10, 30,** and **35**.
8. If the Jews gave up when enemies threatened them, put **S** in blanks **1, 6, 17, 19, 27, 29,** and **31**.
If the people continued to work with enemies nearby, put **T** in blanks **1, 6, 17, 19, 27, 29,** and **31**.
9. If the Jews hired guards to protect them, put **Y** in blanks **8, 12, 16, 22, 24, 26,** and **33**.
If the Jews divided into workers and guards, put **E** in blanks **8, 12, 16, 22, 24, 26,** and **33**.
10. If the Jews finished the walls in 52 days, put an **H** in blanks **2, 5, 7, 13, 14, 18, 20, 21,** and **32**.
If it took the Jews 11 months to finish, put **R** in blanks **2, 5, 7, 13, 14, 18, 20, 21,** and **32**.

 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14
 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30
 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 Psalm 138:6

Extra Activity 2

Page 61

Don't Give Up!

Have the students use the maze to find the words to the verse. When they have completed the exercise, have someone read the verse aloud. Discuss what it means.

Lesson 10, Extra Activity 2

Don't Give Up!

Nehemiah and his builders faced many challenges when they rebuilt Jerusalem's walls. Watch out to avoid the snares they faced as you complete the maze.

On the lines below, write in order the words that you crossed in your path. They spell out a Bible verse that can help us when we have a hard job to do under difficult circumstances.

 Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be
 strong. 1 Corinthians 16:13

* Note: The word *quit* in this verse means to *act*, or *behave*.

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Additional Activities and Ideas for Lesson 10

- Read the story that begins on page 113 of this manual.
- Do the **Optional Worksheet for Lesson 10**, which you have photocopied from page 92. Find the instructions and answers for the Optional Worksheet on page 102.
- **Singing.** All the suggested songs are from *Praises We Sing*.
 - a. Sing “Building Up the Temple” #223. You may wish to change it to “Building up the city walls.”
 - b. Sing “I Want to Be a Worker” #180, “When We All Pull Together” #195, or “Young Workers Now Are Needed” #220.
 - c. Sing “Never Mind It” #266 as a round.

- **Additional Memory Work**—Books of the Old Testament. See Appendix D, page 124.
- **Teamwork Practice.** Do some activities that emphasize the value of teamwork as suggested below. If you haven't already done it, you might try Optional Lesson Introduction #2 on pages 74.

Arrange your class into pairs. Have the entire class spread out along a rope, partners side by side on either side of the rope. Have everyone hold onto the rope with one hand. Blindfold everyone. Then go on a walk. Tell the class that this is a test in communication and teamwork. Tell the person directly behind you exactly what obstacles lie in the path, and what is coming next. That person must relay the message to the next, and so on down the line. If someone fails to communicate properly, the people behind him might crash into something and get hurt. Have a simple obstacle course prepared: go around things, over things, under things, and so on. (Don't go too fast; communicate well yourself!)

Once students are working well together, make the test more difficult. Have everyone holding onto the rope with their right hand drop the rope. These people may not touch the rope or their partner, but must keep up to the rest by listening to their partner's direction. After a while, switch and have the other partner drop the rope. When you are finished, talk about the things you learned in the little object lesson—how badly we need other people, how important it is to communicate properly with others on your team, and how valuable the leader is.

Play "Tug of War" as an exercise in teamwork.

- **Practice for the closing program**, if you are having one.

Scientific Demonstration

Objective: To illustrate how important it is to be faithful in doing our part

Items needed:

- Large identical nails with flat heads
- Hammer for pounding a nail
- Board on which to balance nails

Pound one nail far enough into the board so that the nail stands securely upright. Lay another nail on a flat surface. Lay more nails side by side at right angles to this nail, alternating the points from one side to the other and interlocking the nail heads. Finally, place another nail head to tail over the first nail you laid down. Carefully pick up the assembly and balance it on the upright nail that you pounded into the board.

Show the students what happens when one nail is removed from the assembly. Liken the nail assembly to the way all the people worked together to build Jerusalem's walls despite opposition. God wants us to be faithful in the jobs He asks us to do. Each nail was needed to keep the nail stack balanced. Likewise, every person is important to the success of a group in doing God's work.

