



LESSON 42

1st and 2nd Grade

Principle: Prayer, dependence on God, and hard work

Bible Character: Nehemiah

Scripture Reference: Nehemiah 1-3



PERSONAL PREPARATION: Before this weekend, please read through Nehemiah 1-

3. Nehemiah was an Israelite who was living in Susa. He learned of Jerusalem's vulnerability after its wall and gates have been destroyed, and he immediately turned to God in prayer. He praised God for who He is and then humbled himself before God, recognizing his own sins and the sins of his people. He asked God for help. After praying, he asked the king for permission to rebuild the city, knowing the king had already denied the Israelites once from rebuilding it. Nehemiah was afraid, but he knew God was with him; he depended on God. God was faithful and Nehemiah was able to work hard at the task God gave him in rebuilding Jerusalem.

How do you respond when difficult situations come your way, or in times of trial? Do you turn to God in prayer first and depend on Him? Or do you try to make things better by yourself? Is your life characterized by prayer as Nehemiah's was? Is your fear of God greater than your fear of man? Spend some time asking God to reveal how you can better depend on Him and characterize your life by prayer.

PLUG IN TIME - 5-10 minutes as the kids begin to arrive

Arrive early to check the supplies in the bin and review the lesson. Write today's principle on the whiteboard. Remember to greet all campers upon arrival; meet their parents; welcome and introduce all visitors. Create a welcoming cabin for all campers!

Leadership Worksheet

Supplies:

Worksheet – "Leadership Worksheet" side (1 per camper)

Give each camper a leadership worksheet to complete.

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Revised: 3/24



BIG GROUP TIME - 35-40 minutes

As you line up, remind campers we are going to have fun as an entire Camp Grace group! We are going to live out GRACE by **Glorifying God** through worship, **Respecting All Leaders**, and **Accepting Responsibility** to listen with attentive ears, minds, and hearts – fully **Celebrating Christ** with passion! We should **Encourage Others** to do the same, by not distracting them from their worship of God.

***Take your cabin flag to Big Group.**

The Bridge to Small Group

Today we will learn about leadership. We will study how Nehemiah began with prayer and depended on God as he moved ahead with the task that God had called him to complete. We will see how Nehemiah worked hard at the job that God had given him to do.



SMALL GROUP TIME - 25-30 minutes

Getting Started

If your cabin did well in Big Group, acknowledge it. If not, take a couple of minutes to talk about how they can do better next time.

What did you learn in Big Group? What were the workers trying to do at the beginning? Why? What did the workers learn about leadership? (Begin with prayer; obey and depend on God; work hard at what He gives you to do.)

Who remembers the names of the two kings we learned about last week? (King Hezekiah and King Josiah.) Were they good leaders or bad leaders? (We saw how they were both great leaders during their reigns.) Remember the key chains we worked on last week? What did we learn about leadership from these kings' lives? (King Hezekiah clung to the Lord, and King Josiah always did what was right in God's sight. Both king's humbled themselves under God's authority and obeyed His commands.)

This week, we will continue our study of leadership. We will read about a man named Nehemiah. Nehemiah is an Israelite who lives in Susa, a city in Persia. His brother brought him news about Jerusalem. He said the people were in great trouble and disgrace because the wall of Jerusalem had been torn down and the gates had been destroyed by fire.

Let's read the Bible to see how Nehemiah responds to this news in Nehemiah I [NLT].

Nehemiah 1:4-7

4 When I heard this, I sat down and wept. In fact, for days I mourned, fasted, and prayed to the God of heaven. 5 Then I said,

"O LORD, God of heaven, the great and awesome God who keeps his covenant of unfailing love with those who love him and obey his commands, 6 listen to my prayer! Look down and see me praying night and day for your people Israel. I confess that we have sinned against you. Yes, even my own family and I have sinned! 7 We have sinned terribly by not obeying the commands, decrees, and regulations that you gave us through your servant Moses.

How did Nehemiah feel after hearing the news about Jerusalem? (Allow responses.) He was very upset. What did he do? (Look back at verse 4.) He mourned and fasted, and he prayed to God. He praised God for who He is, our “great and awesome God.” He then humbled himself, confessing his sins and the sins of his people and his family. Then he cried out to God for help. Let’s continue reading the Bible.

Nehemiah 1:11

“I O Lord, please hear my prayer! Listen to the prayers of those of us who delight in honoring you. Please grant me success today by making the king favorable to me. Put it into his heart to be kind to me.”

Nehemiah asked God to remember His promise of unfailing love and to help him when he asked the king for permission to rebuild the wall.

Prayerful Foundation



The purpose is to focus on the importance of prayer.

Supplies:

Blocks (15 per bin)

Have the campers build a tower out of blocks, first using a small, odd-shaped block at the bottom. Talk about the foundation of the tower; will it stand up or will it fall easily? Next build the tower with a large solid block at the bottom. Will this tower stand up or will it fall easily? How important is the first block, or the foundation? Talk about how a strong, firm foundation keeps the tower from falling easily. Discuss how this is what prayer is to a believer – a strong, firm foundation that keeps us strong, even through difficult times.

Tie It Together



Are there times in your life when you feel sad about something? (Allow responses.) What kinds of things might make you sad? What do you do when you feel sad about something? (Allow responses.) We can try to fix things ourselves, but that is like building a tower on a shaky foundation. There is a better way to go. When we are sad or have troubles, we can pray and ask God for help. That is like building a tower on a strong foundation. God always wants us to come to Him first for anything we need. He wants us to begin with prayer, instead of trying to take care of problems ourselves. He wants us to trust in and depend on Him instead of trusting in and depending on ourselves.

After Nehemiah prayed, he went to the king to ask for permission to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem because he knew that was what God wanted him to do. Once before, the Israelites had asked to rebuild the wall and the king had said no. Nehemiah was very afraid to ask the king. But Nehemiah trusted God and depended on God to help him. What do you think the king did? Do you think he said no, or do you think he let Nehemiah rebuild the walls?

Let’s read the Bible to see what happened when Nehemiah asked the king in chapter 2.

Nehemiah 2:4-6

4 The king asked, "Well, how can I help you?"

With a prayer to the God of heaven, 5 I replied, "If it please the king, and if you are pleased with me, your servant, send me to Judah to rebuild the city where my ancestors are buried."

6 The king, with the queen sitting beside him, asked, "How long will you be gone? When will you return?" After I told him how long I would be gone, the king agreed to my request.

What did Nehemiah do after the king asked him, "how can I help you?" Let's look back at verse four again. What did he do? (Allow responses.) He prayed! Once again, Nehemiah prayed to God and depended on Him. He was afraid but he did what God wanted him to do. God worked in the heart of the king, just like Nehemiah asked him to do back in chapter 1, and the king gave him permission to go to Jerusalem!

Dependence: Paper Prayer Chain



The purpose is to recognize how we can be more dependent on God.

Supplies:

Strips of blank paper (4 per camper)

Glue sticks

Markers/Crayons

Give each camper four strips of paper. Ask them to think about times when they have been worried about something, and tell them to draw pictures of these times on each strip of paper. **How can you trust God instead of worrying? When we ask God for help, we are depending on Him instead of ourselves.** Once the campers have drawn on all four strips of paper, assist them in creating a paper prayer chain. Glue the ends of one strip together. Take another strip and put it through the first "link," gluing its ends together. Follow this pattern to make a four-link chain. The campers can take their prayer chain home as a reminder to depend on God through prayer.

Tie It Together



Nehemiah depended on God to help him when he was in a difficult situation. God knows what is best for each of us and He wants us to depend on Him to help us when we are in need. How can you turn from depending on yourself to depending on God? (Allow responses.) Nehemiah turned to God in prayer. You can turn to God in prayer instead of trying to take care of things on your own.

Begin With Prayer



The purpose is to spend some time in prayer for one another to encourage the campers to depend on God in prayer.

Supplies:

None

Spend some time praying for each other and for any campers who are not in class today.

Tie It Together



As we have seen, the first thing Nehemiah did was go to God in prayer. God wants us to depend on Him by seeking His wisdom and help through prayer. No matter what happens in life, we can always go first to God in prayer, asking for Him to provide what we need.

Nehemiah also asked for the king to send letters to the leaders of the cities on the way to Jerusalem for safe travel. He arrived safely in Jerusalem and three days later he told the city officials he was there to begin rebuilding the walls. Let's continue reading the Bible.

Nehemiah 2:17-18

17 But now I said to them, "You know very well what trouble we are in. Jerusalem lies in ruins, and its gates have been destroyed by fire. Let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem and end this disgrace!" 18 Then I told them about how the gracious hand of God had been on me, and about my conversation with the king.

They replied at once, "Yes, let's rebuild the wall!" So they began the good work.

Nehemiah gathered men and began to rebuild the city walls. Did he sit back and let the others build the walls? (Allow responses.) No, he worked hard at the task God gave him to do. Do you work hard at the things you are supposed to do (chores, school work, sports teams, etc)? (Allow responses.) When your parents ask you to do something, do you do it the best you can or just enough to get it done? How do you think God wants you to work at the things He has given you to do? (Allow responses.) God calls us to do everything for His glory. He wants us to depend on Him and work hard on the things He has called us to do.

Building a Wall



The purpose is to see what the Bible says about working for the Lord.

Supplies

Unfinished wood square (1 per camper)
Verse printout (1 per camper)
Decoupage medium/diluted school glue (1 bottle/jar per bin)
Paper towels (1 roll per bin)
Paper plates (for decoupage medium) (2-3 per session)
Craft sticks (5 per bin for campers who don't want to use fingers)
Wipes (for cleaning after craft)
Markers

Give each camper a wood square, a verse printout, and a paper towel to use as a placemat. Have them decorate one side of the wood with markers. Pour decoupage medium onto paper plates (not too much – you don't want it to be too deep and get too messy!). Have each camper put a small daub of

decoupage medium on the back corners of the verse printout and stick it to the square. You may have to help younger campers get it centered. The majority of the “glue” will go on top of the paper, as campers use a finger or craft stick to spread a thin layer of the medium over the verse printout – making sure they cover the entire piece of paper (even past the edges!) with the medium. (Depending on class size, you could even show them how to drag the verse printout through the liquid on the plate, and then stick the verse to the square.) Go over the verse with them as they work. Set the square aside to dry on the paper towel. Explain to them that they can set this out as a reminder of Nehemiah’s leadership, faithfulness, and hard work.

Tie It Together



What does this verse talk about? (Allow responses.) It talks about working hard. Why should we work hard? (Allow responses.) Because we work for the Lord. The verse tells us to work with all of our heart at whatever we do; it does not say to work with all of our heart only at what we want to do. In everything we do, we are doing it for God. What are some things that you are asked to do by your parents, teachers, coaches, etc? (Allow responses.) Do you always work hard at whatever you are asked to do? (Allow responses.) For example, if your parents asked you to clean your room, how would you clean it? Would you clean it up really well or would you push everything under the bed? (Allow responses.) What if God asked you to do the same thing your parents asked you to do? Would you do a better job if God asked you than if your parents asked you? (Allow responses.) God wants us to submit to our parents or any people of authority in our lives, just like we would submit to Him if He asked us to do something. The next time your mom or dad asks you to do something you don’t want to do, what can you remember to help you do your best? (Allow responses.)

Depend on God



The purpose is for the campers to examine their lives and how they can depend on God through prayer.

Supplies:

Worksheet - “I Pray For” side(1 per camper)

Have campers turn their worksheets to the “I Pray For...” side and draw pictures under each section header to remind them to depend on God through prayer.

Tie It Together



Nehemiah gave us a great example of how to depend on God through going to Him in prayer. God wants us to depend on Him with our whole life, and we can do that by going to Him first through prayer. We can pray for our church, our family and our friends. Take this home and put it somewhere you will see it each day as a reminder to pray and depend on God.

Wrap-it Up (use white board)

Let’s review what we learned. What are the steps you would take when you are faced with a difficult situation or a hard task? How does God want you to respond?

1. **BEGIN WITH PRAYER.** Take the situation to God.
2. **DEPEND ON GOD.** Do not try to solve the situation by doing what you think is right. Depend on God and trust that His way is the best way.
3. **WORK HARD** at whatever God has given you to do, even in the small things.

Prayer Time

Spend some time in prayer to close small group time. Ask God to help us pray to Him; depend on Him and work hard for Him.



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