

THEME FOR UNIT 11: We Love God
UNIT BIBLE MEMORY VERSE: Matthew 22:37

NEHEMIAH WORKS FOR GOD

BIBLE BASIS

Nehemiah and the people build a wall (Nehemiah 2:4-6, 11-20; 4:6; 6:15).

BIBLE TRUTH

We can work together for God.

BIBLE MEMORY VERSE

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart.” Matthew 22:37

LESSON AIM

That your students will work for God by helping at home and at church.

1

LIFE NEED (3-5 MINUTES)

- Children experience working together

Materials: Beanbag, crumpled paper, or small ball

2

BIBLE LEARNING (10-15 MINUTES)

- Teach with pictures about Nehemiah working for God
- Review with questions



Materials: Bible, “Nehemiah Works for God” Teaching Aid 12

3

BIBLE APPLICATION (10 MINUTES)

- Practice the Bible memory verse with a poem
- Make and color a stand-up wall

Materials: *Preschool Make-It/Take-It* for Lesson 9, crayons, tape

4

LIFE RESPONSE (10 MINUTES)

- Read a story about helping at Sunday school
- Children plan to work together for God with someone



Materials: *My Sunday Pictures* Lesson 9, half-sheets of construction paper



This symbol means extra preparation or supplies are needed.



Understanding the Bible

In 586 B.C., the Babylonian nation came down to the little country of Judah and destroyed Jerusalem (its capital) and took many of the people of Judah captive back to Babylonia, which was more than 600 miles from the Jews' homeland. Then the Persians conquered the Babylonians in 539 B.C., so they took over the number one position of power in the Bible-time world.

The Persian emperor Xerxes [ZURK-seez] had been married to the Bible's Queen Esther. Daniel the Jew ranked high in the early Persian Empire. Almost 100 years after the Persians became the number one world power, King Artaxerxes I became the Persian king, and this week's story begins in the 20-year rule of King Artaxerxes over Persia.

The Bible books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther all fit into this time period of the Persian empire. The Old Testament history ends about 100 years later.

Ezra, the scribe, built up the Jewish people's morale, while Nehemiah (literally) took charge of building Jerusalem's walls back up. This took place in 445 B.C. The whole wall-building project was finished in less than two months (Neh. 6:15), which shows what can happen when God's people work together as a team to accomplish a task for His glory.

Nehemiah was cupbearer to King Artaxerxes I. This was a very important position in Bible times because the cupbearer tasted the king's wine to see that it was not poisoned.

Nehemiah had heard that Jerusalem's walls and gates were destroyed. He felt so upset that he mourned, prayed, and fasted for several days. His sadness showed even when he was with the king.

When the king asked him why he was so sad, Nehemiah was afraid, for being sad in the king's presence was a serious wrong. But Scripture tells us Nehemiah prayed, then told the king that he wanted to rebuild Jerusalem's wall.

The king wrote letters giving Nehemiah the authority and the means to rebuild the wall. One of the king's letters reversed a previous decree to stop work on the walls (Ezra 4:21).

Nehemiah went in secret to look at what needed to be done, because some people were against the Jews and this project. Then he called on the Jewish people to help him. Nehemiah persuaded the people, and he told them about the king's letters. Nehemiah 2:18 gives the response of the people: "Let us start rebuilding."

Even with opposition, the work was completed in a short time by thousands of enthusiastic workers who knew they were doing what God wanted them to do.

Understanding Your Students

Young children love to do things for themselves, because it gives them a feeling of self-confidence. Since their work is often their play, you can use their play experiences to show them how they can work for God.

Today your children will work on a puzzle of wall pieces in Bible Learning to get an idea of how Nehemiah and the people built the wall. You will help them relate Bible Learning to their lives as you compliment them for taking turns, working together, and helping each other.

CLASSROOM TIPS

Throughout the morning, help your preschoolers review the many ways they can show love to God by listening, praying, giving, obeying, and working together.

- Make your job easier by letting your students help with supplies. They can put crayons and paper on the table for arts and crafts or hand out napkins at snack time. Thank them as they push chairs in, throw trash away, or put toys on shelves, and you will be rewarded with beaming smiles.
- Praise the children who are listening and obeying, and the others will try hard to win your praise too. Remind your students that you and God are happy when they listen and obey.

WORSHIP ACTIVITIES

- Play a DiskIt CD song to gather your children for worship. Choose a song to sing together as a class.
- Have a student help collect offerings and thank God for the money. Remind children of last week's lesson where they learned that they can give to God. Ask them what they gave to God. Some may have brought their offering envelopes back with money.
- Older children may be ready to show younger children how to get ready for prayer.



BEFORE CLASS

Your students are reassured by your warm, personal greeting every Sunday. **I'm happy that you are here today. Our class is going to work together on many things as we learn about God.** Children may give their offerings. Have them mark their attendance on the attendance chart. Then direct each child to the first activity of the day.

GETTING STARTED

The following activities will prepare the children for the lesson about working together for God.



Blocks: Build a wall with blocks. Even if the children work on their own side by side, compliment them for working together. **You are doing a great job working together.**



Home Living: Let your children wipe the tables with a damp cloth or dust the toy shelves. **It's fun when we work together to clean.**



Projects: Put a large piece of butcher paper on a wall at your children's height. Let them use crayons or markers to create a class mural of ways we show love to God. Children can make drawings of listening to God's Word, obeying God, thanking God, and giving to God. **We are working together. Today we will learn more about working together for God.**

1

Life Need

5 minutes

Objective: That your students will experience working together and talk about working together.

This activity will prepare your students for the Bible story about Nehemiah and the people working together to build a wall for God.

When the children are seated in a circle and ready to listen, introduce the game. Playing a team game and talking about working together helps the children understand today's Bible story.

Today we're going to play a game where you have to help each other. As your group works together, you will finish the activity. Divide the children into two groups. Have the groups line up in single file lines. Give a beanbag or crumpled paper ball to the first child in each line. Have the first person hand it to the child behind him, through his legs. The children should continue passing the beanbags to the people behind them through the legs.

When the beanbags reach the end of the lines, have the children pass them forward over their heads. Encourage the children as they work together to move the beanbags. If a beanbag or ball is dropped, let the child pick it up and continue passing.

What did each of you have to do? (Pass the beanbag.) If you hadn't each passed the beanbag, it wouldn't have moved up and down the lines. You had to work together to pass the beanbags. Let's talk more about ways you work together.

What are some of the ways you and your family work together? (Children will answer depending on their own family situations. They may talk about ways they clean, prepare meals, go camping, care for a pet or garden, and so forth. Accept all their answers.)

When do you and your friends work together? (Expect a variety of answers. They may talk about playing a game, playing with certain toys, doing a craft, or preparing something at preschool.)

You work together with your families and friends. Today we're going to learn that we can work together for God. Our Bible story today tells us about a man named Nehemiah. He wanted to rebuild some broken walls. As you hear the story, listen to find out who worked together with Nehemiah to rebuild the walls.

2

Bible Learning

10 minutes

Objective: That your students will discover how Nehemiah and the people worked together to rebuild the wall.

In advance, punch out the figures from “Nehemiah Works for God” Teaching Aid 12. Attach velcro, found in your Creative Teaching Aids packet, and place the figures in the order you will use them. Open your Bible to Nehemiah 2.

Bible Story

Our story today comes from the Bible. It is found in the book of the Bible called Nehemiah. (Show the children where Nehemiah 2 is in your Bible. Keep your Bible open to Nehemiah as you tell the story.)

The Bible tells us about a man named Nehemiah. He, along with many other people, lived far from their country, Judah. They lived in a place named Babylon. Nehemiah worked for the king. It was a very good job.

But one day Nehemiah heard some bad news. (Make a sad face.) **Some people had moved back to the country of Judah. The wall around the city of Jerusalem was broken. It was supposed to keep the people safe. Because it was broken, the people weren’t safe. Nehemiah was very sad. He prayed and asked God what to do.**

One day, sad Nehemiah brought the king his wine. He had never been sad in front of the king before. The king asked Nehemiah what was wrong.

Nehemiah told the king about the walls of Jerusalem being broken.

The king asked him, “What do you want?”

So Nehemiah asked the king if he could go to Jerusalem to fix the wall. The king agreed.

Nehemiah got on his horse. (Place Figure 1, Nehemiah, on the left of the board.) **Clip, clop went the horse.** (Have the children repeat the sound.) **The trip took many days.** (Move Figure 1 across the board and off.) **Finally, Nehemiah got to Jerusalem.** (Place Figure 1 back on the left side of the board.) **Nehemiah rode around the city and looked at the wall.** (Scatter Figures 2A–2D, the wall sections, to look like a broken wall.)

When he saw how broken the wall was,

Nehemiah felt very sad.

The next day, Nehemiah talked to the people in Jerusalem about the wall.

(Place Figure 3, the people, so it faces Figure 1.) **He said, “The wall around our city is falling apart. Who will help rebuild it so we will be safe?”**

The people cried out, “We will work together to help you rebuild the wall!”

(Remove Figures 1 and 3. Place Figures 4 and 5, the men, near the pieces of wall.) **All the people worked together. They mixed clay to hold the stones together.** (Pretend to mix.) **They lifted the heavy stones and put them back in place.** (Let the children put Figures 2A–2D together on the board.) **The wall became longer and longer.** (Stretch arms out wide.) **The wall became higher and higher.** (Lift arms up high.) **Soon the wall was finished.** (Place Figures 1 and 3, Nehemiah and the people, near the completed wall.)

Nehemiah and the people were happy. They had worked together for God to rebuild the wall around Jerusalem. They had worked together for God. We can work together for God too.

Bible Story Review

Review with these questions.

- 1. What did Nehemiah want to rebuild?** (The wall around Jerusalem.)
- 2. Who worked together to rebuild the wall?** (Nehemiah and the people.)
- 3. Why is it important to work together?** (Some of the children may answer “I don’t know.” Lead them to see that the wall wouldn’t have been built unless they worked together.)
- 4. What can we do together?** (We can work together for God.)



“Nehemiah Works for God”
Teaching Aid 12

3

Bible Application

10 minutes

Objective: Students will learn that they can show love to God when they work together for Him.

Bible Memory Verse

When we work together for God, we are showing our love to Him. Let's work together to say our Bible verse: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart" Matthew 22:37. Now let's work together to say our action rhyme.

**Love the Lord your God
with all your heart.**

(Clap, clap.)

Listen and obey.

(Cup hands around ears.)

Thank Him every day.

(Fold hands in prayer.)

**Love the Lord your God
with all your heart.**

(Clap, clap.)

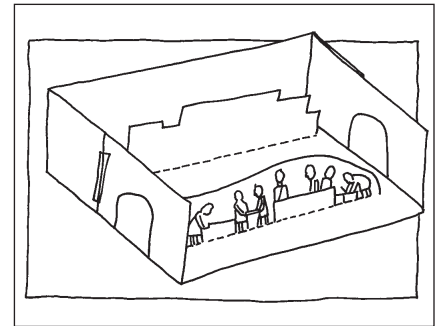
Let's say our Bible verse again: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart" Matthew 22:37. How do we love the Lord our God with all our heart? (By listening to God's Word, obeying God, thanking Him, giving offerings, and working together for Him.)

Today we learned that we can show love to God by working together for Him.

Handcraft

Now we're going to make a stand-up picture of Nehemiah and the walls that he and the people rebuilt together.

Remove Lesson 9 from Make-It/Take-It before class and pull off the margins. Open the corner slits and punch out around the two pop-up figures. Then fold the project back on the broken lines and unfold so your students can follow the crease lines later.



Make-It/Take-It for Lesson 9

Let your students color the picture. Then help them fold up and tape the edges of the paper to make three walls. Show them how to fold the people and the buildings so they stand up. You might want to show the children how to use their fingers as pretend legs to walk around the wall.

God was happy that a lot of people helped to rebuild the big wall. We show God that we love Him when we work for Him at home and at church.

We can work together for God.



4

Life Response

10 minutes

Objective: Students will plan to work together for God with someone.

Read aloud to your students "Anthony Helps Out" from *My Sunday Pictures* Lesson 9, back.

Present-Day Story

Anthony came to Sunday school early. He loved Sunday school, especially when it was outside. He wanted to help his teacher.

The teacher said, "I am so thankful you are here. I have so much to do. I have to move the chairs. I have to get the Bibles."

Anthony said, "I can help you move the chairs."

"You can put a Bible on each of the chairs too," the teacher said.

His teacher went inside the church to get snacks for the children and things for the Bible lesson.

Anthony was excited to help. He got the Bibles and put one on each chair.

"Thank you, Anthony. You are a good helper," his teacher said. "We show love to God when we work together for Him."

Our Bible story today is about a man named Nehemiah and some people who worked together for God," his teacher said. "They worked together to do what God wanted them to do."

"I like to show God I love him," said Anthony. "Thank you for letting me help you work for God."

Closing Activities

Show children the Bible story picture on *My Sunday Pictures*. **Our Bible story today was about Nehemiah. We learned that Nehemiah and the people worked together for God to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem.**

What can we do together? (We can work together for God.) **Can you name some of the things we did today where we had to work together?** (Let the children share their ideas.



My Sunday Pictures
Lesson 9 (back)

They may include cleaning up, making a mural together, building with blocks, helping others, and any other activities done during the lesson.)

Sunday school isn't the only place we can work together for God. We can work together with people all during the week. Who can you work together with this week? (If children are having trouble coming up with ideas, suggest mother, father, or a friend.)

How can you work together for God? (Encourage children to think of playing together, doing a chore, etc.) **Quietly think of someone you can choose to work together with this week.** Give the children time to think of a person.

Hand each child a half-sheet of construction paper. **Draw a picture of the person you are going to work together with for God this week and what you might do.** Give the children a few minutes to draw.

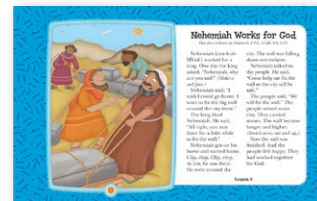
Let's share who we're going to work together with. As each child shares his or her picture, put the idea into a song to the tune of "The Mulberry Bush," used earlier. You might want to go first as an example:

**Mary can work with mother this week,
Mother this week, mother this week.
Mary can work with mother this week.
They can set the table.**

Dear God, we love You very much. Help us show our love for You by working for You at home and at church. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Make sure each child has a stand-up "wall" Make-It/Take-It project and a *My Sunday Pictures* card.

Say a personal goodbye to each child. **Show God you love Him by working together with someone this week.**



My Sunday Pictures
Lesson 9 (front)