

Alley SG - September 1-2, 2018

Bible Story: If I Had a Hammer (Nehemiah Hears about the Wall) • *Nehemiah 1:1–2:9*

Key Question: What around you needs to be done?

Bottom Line: Be on the lookout for what needs to be done.

Memory Verse: *“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord...” Colossians 3:23a NIV*

1. Worship Experience Extension

What You Need: Bibles, “Bricks” (5 per kid), pens, tape (one roll per group), designated wall in the environment labeled “WALL OF INITIATIVE” (one per campus)

What You Do:

- **Review** the Bible story. Sample review questions could be:
 - What did Nehemiah see that needed to be done?
 - What is the big deal about the wall being destroyed?
 - Why do you think the wall was important?
 - Whom did the wall protect?
 - What did Nehemiah do when he heard about the condition of the wall? (*showed initiative, prayed, asked forgiveness, remembered God’s promises—this is a great opportunity to address prayer as an action. Often when we see what needs to be done, our first step is to pray. This is an opportunity to discuss how Nehemiah looked out and saw the needs of the people in Jerusalem. Nehemiah was safe in the King’s court, and yet he looked out beyond himself to see what needed to be done*)
 - What did Nehemiah’s response say about his relationship with God?
- **Explain** to kids that throughout this month they will build a “WALL OF INITIATIVE.” Each week we will add “Bricks” to the wall.
- **Ask** the following questions. As kids answer, **instruct** them to write their answer on a “Brick” and tape the “Brick” to the wall.
 - Where can you show initiative?
 - Who can be affected by your actions when you show initiative?
 - What are ways you can remind yourself to be on the lookout to see what needs to be done? How can you remind yourself to look out at the bigger picture?
 - Give an example of something you could do to show initiative.

2. Just for Fun

What You Need: Ten plastic spoons (per group)

What You Do:

- **Form** a circle.
- **Explain** that you will lay 10 spoons in various patterns and kids will determine what number is represented.
 - The trick is that independent of the pattern of the spoons the number represented is determined by the number of fingers you have showing. (*Note: You are the only one who knows that the number has nothing to do with the spoons.*)
 - The goal of the game is to figure out the secret and say the correct number.

- **Instruct** students not to reveal the secret when/if they figure it out. They should let the game play out, and then the secret will be revealed.
- **Begin the game** by laying 10 spoons on the floor and subtly, with palms face down, reveal five fingers, while making sure the rest of your fingers aren't outstretched.
- **Ask** kids to guess what number is being represented.
 - In this case, the answer is five. It has nothing to do with the spoons but with the number of fingers/thumbs you have showing.
- After everyone has guessed, **lay** the spoons in a different pattern and, once again, with palms face down, subtly **reveal** a new number using your fingers.
- **Keep creating** new patterns and new numbers until kids figure it out or time runs out.
- Be sure to **reveal** the secret for how to determine the number before going on to the next activity.

3. Get Your Head in the Game

What You Need: No supplies needed

What You Do:

- **Direct** kids to sit in a circle facing the center of the circle.
- **Select** a volunteer to stand in the center of the circle.
- **Explain** to the group that one thing about the volunteer will change and the group will have to use their power of observation to figure out what is different.
- **Encourage** the volunteer to strike several "modeling" poses so the group can get a good look at him.
- **Tell** kids to turn around so their backs are facing the center of the circle and to close their eyes.
- **Allow** the volunteer to change one thing about his appearance.
 - For example, untie his shoes, tuck or un-tuck his shirt, remove glasses, remove a watch and place it on the other wrist, etc.
- When the change has been made, **instruct** the group to turn around facing the center of the circle.
- **Encourage** the group guess what change has been made. The kid who guesses correctly gets to stand in the center of the circle next.

What You Say:

"You did a great job observing changes made with each of our volunteers. **[Transition] In Large Group, we heard why it is important to be on the lookout and alert to what is happening around us. God helps us to take initiative, and do the right thing.**"

4. Discussion Questions

- What are some typical things that need to get done at your home?
- We all get caught up in our own stuff, only thinking about the things WE need to do. What are some ways you can start to notice other things that need to be done?
- What if you see something that needs to be done but you don't know what to do? How can you figure out where to start? (*ask God for help, talk to other people, collect information, etc.*)
- Once we identify something needs to be done, why ask God for help?
- Even though God didn't tell Nehemiah exactly how he was going to help Jerusalem, how did talking to God help Nehemiah?

- *(This is an opportunity to discuss God may not show you the entire picture, but instead He may show you how to start. Nehemiah didn't know how he would rebuild the wall . . . yet . . . but in asking God for help, Nehemiah was strengthened and encouraged and given hope. Nehemiah was given hope and courage to simply begin and trust God.)*

5. Verse to Take with You

What You Need: Bibles

What You Do:

- **Look** up the memory verse, Colossians 3:23a, and **read** it out loud together.
- **Challenge** kids to think of an action of some kind to replace "everything you do." (For instance, "play an instrument" or "do your homework.")
- **Challenge** kids to act out their replacement action word, without making a sound, for the group to guess. Be prepared to give an example if necessary.
- To make it competitive, **give** a point to each kid who guesses correctly and uses the word in the memory verse.
 - For example, if the words were, "play soccer," kids would say, "Play soccer with all your heart" or "Play soccer as if you were playing for the Lord."
- *To dig deeper, ask:* How can this verse help you with initiative? How does this verse help motivate you to have initiative?

6. Make it Personal with Prayer

What You Need: No Supplies Needed

- **Allow** kids to share their prayers if they want.
- **Encourage** them to come back next week and share with the group how they showed initiative.
- **Close** in prayer.

What You Say:

Dear God, today we talked about Your servant Nehemiah and how he saw what needed to be done and came to You for help. God, we want to serve You by doing what needs to be done. Sometimes it is hard to recognize opportunities to show initiative but we know You will help us if we ask. God, open our eyes to see opportunities to show initiative, amen.

HAND OUT "GOD TIME" SHEETS TO EACH STUDENT BEFORE DISMISSING

IF STUDENTS BRING THEM BACK THE FOLLOWING WEEK, THEY RECEIVE \$3 IN ALLEY CASH