

Alley SG - September 22-23, 2018

Bible Story: He Came in Like a Wrecking Ball (Nehemiah and Sanballat) • *Nehemiah 2:19-20; 4, 6*

Key Question: What distracts you from doing what needs to be done?

Bottom Line: Stay focused on 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. Just for Fun

What You Need: *Optional:* mobile device

What You Do:

- **Tell** kids to count to 25 out loud.
- Once they hit number 10, try to **distract** them by saying arbitrary numbers out loud.
- **Ask:**
 - What happened once I started saying different numbers?
 - Was it hard to stay focused on your counting?
 - Why do you think that is?
- **Divide** the group into two teams.
- **Coordinate** the teams to **sing** "Row, Row, Row Your Boat" in a "round" fashion.
 - One team starts singing and when they finish singing the first line, "row, row, row your boat," (and before they start singing "gently down the stream") the other group starts singing, "row, row, row your boat."
 - Lyrics are:
Row, row, row your boat
Gently down the stream
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily
Life is but a dream
- **Ask** kids if they know the following songs: "The ABC Song," "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star," or "Baa, Baa, Black Sheep."
- **Explain** the three songs have the same melody but different words.
- **Tell** kids to **choose** one of the three songs and on your cue, **instruct** them to sing their song simultaneously.
- **Encourage** them to stay focused and sing without messing up and singing someone else's words.
- **Repeat** a few times.

2. Get Your Head in the Game

What You Need: Mini marshmallows (1 bag per group, per service), craft sticks (1 per child)

What You Do:

- **Give** kids a craft stick and a handful of marshmallows.
- **Challenge** kids to build a wall of marshmallows on the craft stick.
 - Kids hold the craft stick in one hand and place the marshmallows on the stick with their other hand.
 - Increase the challenge by asking kids to build the wall while holding the craft stick in their mouths.

Note: Licking the marshmallows helps in the building process, but let kids figure that out on their own.

What You Say:

"It was difficult to build a wall especially because the marshmallows aren't all the same, and if you got distracted, your wall would come crashing down."

Nehemiah and his crew had a lot of distractions too as they rebuilt the wall around Jerusalem. **[Transition]** **Let's head to Large Group to hear about the distractions that threatened to keep the wall from being built."**

3. Bible Story Extension

What You Need: Bibles, "Bricks" (1 per child), pens, tape (1 roll per group), the WALL OF INITIATIVE

What You Do:

- **Sit** in a circle.
- **Review** the Bible Story. Potential review questions could be:
 - What were some of the distractions Nehemiah faced? (*Refer to Nehemiah 4:1-3, 7-12, 6:2—mocking, fighting, the Jews were tired, enemies were trying to hurt him, enemies trying to trick him*)
 - How did Nehemiah avoid each distraction? (*Refer to Nehemiah 4:4-6, 13-15, 6:3-9—he prayed, encouraged the Jews, came up with a plan to help the Jews keep building, said "no" to leaving the job site, Nehemiah knew God's truth and didn't believe his enemies' lies*)
- **Give** each kid a brick and a pencil.
- When you **say** "GO," each kid should write as many distractions as she can think of on her brick.
 - Encourage kids to refer to the distractions in the stories they wrote for the "Take a Snapshot Activity" or the distractions Nehemiah and the Jews faced.
- When you **say** "PASS," kids stop writing (even if they are in the middle of a sentence) and pass their bricks to the kids on their right.
- Kids should read what is on the paper passed to them and:
 - Write an "!" if they agree with the distraction written by other kids
 - Write one way they could avoid any of the distractions on the brick.
 - Encourage kids to remember the ways Nehemiah avoided distractions.
- **Continue** until each kid has her original page. Be sure to vary the amount of time kids have to write on each brick in order to keep interest high.
- Depending on how many kids are in the group, you may want to **give** kids an extra brick so they have room to write. You could also divide the group into groups of five or six kids.
- Briefly **discuss** the answers:
 - What did you notice?
 - What are some of the common distractions?
 - What were ways to avoid common distractions?
 - What examples of ways to avoid distractions do you think would be helpful to you? Why?
- **Instruct** kids to tape the bricks to the WALL OF INITIATIVE.

4. Discussion Questions

- Have you ever been doing something, maybe homework, when you get distracted and suddenly a half hour goes by and you haven't done any of your homework? Encourage kids to share times this has happened to them.
- How can you know when you are being distracted?
- When is it easy to get distracted?
- What can you do to remind yourself to stay focused?

5. Make it Personal with Prayer

What You Need: The WALL OF INITIATIVE

What You Do:

- **Pair** kids up.
- **Allow** time for partners to review distractions on the bricks taped to the WALL OF INITIATIVE with each other.

- **Encourage** them to discuss what distractions they find difficult to avoid and why. Then ask them to pray for each other.
- **Close** in prayer.

What You Say:

Dear God, Nehemiah stayed focused on You and focused on building the wall. Even when others tried to distract him or when people around him were discouraged, Nehemiah stayed focus on what You needed done. God, help us be like Nehemiah. When we find ourselves distracted by others, distracted by (list some distractions kids mentioned during Small Group), remind us to turn to You. You are there for us just like You were there for Nehemiah. God give us eyes to stay focused on showing 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