

Alley SG - September 8-9, 2018

Bible Story: I'm Working on a Building (Nehemiah Plans to Rebuild the Wall)

• *Nehemiah 2:11–18*

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

Bottom Line: Don't wait for someone else to do 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. Take a Snapshot

What You Need: "Excuse Cards" Activity Cards (1 set per group), index cards (6 per group per service), pens (campus supplies)

What You Do:

- **Pair** kids up.
- **Ask** teams to pick an "Excuse Card."
- **Explain** that excuses can keep us from doing what needs to be done.
- **Instruct** teams to read their "Excuse Cards" and for the scenario on their card to brainstorm a list of excuses that might keep them from showing initiative.
- Kids can **write** their ideas on the index card.
- When teams are finished, **discuss** their lists.
- Potential discussion questions could be:
 - Are any of the excuses similar? Which ones? Why do you think it is a common excuse?
 - What about if it is someone else's job? For example, it is your brother's job to walk the dog. Is that an acceptable excuse for not taking the dog for a walk? Why or why not?
 - What about if you just didn't see something needed to be done? For example, you were busy with your friends at lunch and you just didn't see the kid who was sitting alone. Is that an acceptable excuse for not asking him to join your group? Why or why not?
 - Can you think of any excuses that are acceptable for not doing something? What are they?

2. Bible Story Extension

What You Need: Bibles, Ping pong balls with words in bags (2 sets of 10 per group), 2 sets of "From God" and "Excuse" cups (per group), "Excuse Cards" from the "Take a Snapshot Activity"

What You Do:

- **Review** the Bible story.
- **Read** Nehemiah 2:11-18.
- Potential questions for review could be:
 - What skills do you think someone would need to rebuild the wall?
 - Does anyone remember what Nehemiah's job was (*cupbearer*)? And what is a cupbearer? (*someone who tastes the king's food and drink to make sure it isn't poisoned*)

- **Refer** to the excuses from Take a Snapshot activity and **ask**:
- Could any of the excuses we thought of apply to Nehemiah's situation? Which ones?
- **Explain** that Nehemiah could have said, "Building walls—not my job!" or "I don't know how to build a wall—I am a cupbearer!"
- **Ask**:
 - Instead of giving excuses, what did Nehemiah do? (*inspected, assessed the situation, figured out what needed to be done, recruited people to help, shared his prayers*)
- **Read** Nehemiah 2:18.
- **Emphasize** that Nehemiah, knowing he had God on his side, was a "no excuse" guy.
- **Tell** kids they're going to play a game to help remind them that when God asks us to do something, He will equip us with what we need.
- **Divide** the group into two teams.
- **Give** each team the cups labeled "From God" and "Excuses."
- **Explain** the game:
 - Each Ping-Pong ball has a word on it; the word is either something God gives us to help us show initiative or something that is an excuse not to show initiative.
 - When you say go, teams quickly take one ping pong ball out of the bag.
 - Teams decide if the word on the ball is "From God" or an "Excuse" and put the ping pong ball in the corresponding cup.
 - The first team to get all of their ping pong balls sorted correctly wins.
- **Discuss** the ping pong balls in each cup. Does the group agree they are in the correct cup? Why or why not?
- **Ask**:
 - Can you give other examples of how God will equip us with what we need to show initiative?

3. Verse to Take with You

What You Need: "Verse Bricks" Cards (1 per group), dice (10 per bin), hole punch (one per group), brads (one per kid)

What You Do:

- **Sit** in a circle and give each kid a pack of 5 cards
- **Ask** them to unclip the pack and place everyone's "Verse Bricks" in center.
- **Mix** up all the cards in the center pile, face up.
- **Give** each kid a die.
- **Explain** that the object of the game is to collect all 5 "Verse Bricks" cards as quickly as you can.
 - Kids roll a die and do the following, based on the number they rolled:
 - **Roll a one – Select a "Verse Brick" and give it to a neighbor**
 - **Roll a two, four, or six – Select a "Verse Brick" for yourself. Don't wait—grab one.**
 - **Roll a three – Do three jumping jacks and roll again**
 - **Roll a five – Wait to get a "Verse Brick" – Count to fifty by fives before grabbing one.**
 - After doing the action indicated by the number rolled, they roll again and repeat the process.
 - The first kid to collect all five cards wins!

- **Keep playing** until everyone has collected all 5 cards.
- When everyone is finished, **instruct** kids to punch a hole in the right side of their cards and create a booklet by attaching a brad.
- **Discuss** the verses with the group. Potential discussion questions could be:
 - When God wants you to show initiative, He equips you with what you need. Read each verse and ask what the verse says God will provide?
 - Is there a verse you really like? Why or why not?
 - Why do you think there is a graphic of a tool on the “Verse Bricks”? (*Scripture is a tool God gives us—we can use scripture to help fight against excuses that may keep us from showing initiative*)

4. Discussion Questions

- What keeps you from doing what needs to be done? What excuses do you typically use?
- Nehemiah had no training to rebuild a wall. His job was to taste the king’s food, not to do construction. What can you do when you see something that needs to be done but it is not your job and you have no training how to do it? (*Think about what Nehemiah did when he got to Jerusalem. This is an opportunity to talk about how important it is to ask God for help, observe, evaluate a situation, collect data, pray some more and then act.*)
- When have you felt like there was a really hard job to be done, but you were in over your head and didn’t know how to even get started?
- When have you felt in over your head just because the job was too big?

5. Make it Personal with Prayer

What You Need: “Verse Bricks” from “Verses to Take with You”

What You Do:

- **Challenge** kids to select a verse from their “Verse Brick” booklet to memorize this week.
- **Close** in prayer.

Note: Remember to include prayer for anyone who shared a situation during Social that needs initiative but doesn’t know where to start.

What To Say:

Dear God, just like Nehemiah, we know You will equip us with whatever we need to do what needs to be done. Sometimes, it is easy to think of an excuse to not show initiative. God, help us to remember You will give us help to overcome any excuse. If we need strength, You will give it to us. If we need wisdom, You will provide. When we are scared, You give us a spirit of power, love and self-control. We thank You for Your Word that is a tool to help us remember how awesome You are and how You are always there to help us 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