

# Alley SG—September 4th-6th, 2021

**Today's Bible Story:** Makin' Plans (Nehemiah Plans to Rebuild the Wall) • *Nehemiah 1:1–2:18*

**Today's Key Question:** What around you needs to be done?

**Today's Bottom Line:** Don't wait for someone else to do what needs to be done.

**Monthly 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:** No Supplies Needed

### What You Do:

- Challenge kids to say "pterodactyl" (teh·ruh·**dak**·tl) four times without smiling and without showing their teeth.
  - They can do this by putting their lips over their teeth, so their teeth are not visible then speaking as if they are toothless.
- Play in a circle as each kid takes a turn or let partners challenge one another.
- If they smile, laugh, or show their teeth, they are out.
- Vary the game as time allows.
  - Add theme-related words such as astronaut, solar system, or names of planets.
  - Try it with foods, sports, songs, or places to visit.
  - Let kids talk about a way they were helpful this week.

## 2. Opening Activity

**What You Need:** Paper (1 sheet per 2 kids)

### What You Do:

- Ask partners to stand facing one another about six feet apart.
- Crumple up a piece of paper and place it in the middle between partners.
- Explain that you will quickly call out a series of actions they must do such as touching their head, knees, ears, and so forth.
- When you say, "Trash!" they try to be faster than their partner to pick up the trash (crumpled paper).
- The kid on each team who grabs it first wins that round and the other sits down.
- Choose new partners and repeat rounds until only one kid is left.
- Play as many rounds as time allows.
- Use a variety of actions and keep the game moving by calling them out quickly and in differing amounts.
  - hair
  - nose
  - armpit
  - foot
  - elbow
  - shoulder
  - knee
  - heel
  - neck
  - toes

## What You Say:

“Picking up trash was never more fun, wouldn’t you agree? You guys are really good at it—and FAST! We’re not always that fast when it comes to picking up trash or doing other stuff that needs to be done. Sometimes it’s just easier to walk right past it or to ignore something around us that needs to be done. **[Transition] That’s something we can change. We’re going to learn what it looks like to take initiative.**”

## 3. Take a Snapshot

**What You Need:** Paper, scissors, *Alley Cash*

### What You Do:

- Let kids choose partners.
- Give each kid a sheet of paper and a pair of scissors.
- Ask kids to hold out their right hand with fingers outstretched in front of their partner.
- Direct kids to carefully observe the size and shape of their partner’s fingers and hand for 10 seconds.
- Instruct kids to turn around and use the paper and scissors to cut out the shape of their partner’s hand from memory. The goal is to come as close as they can to the actual hand size and shape.

**NOTE: To keep kids from mindlessly cutting out something that barely resembles a handprint, be clear about the goal. If desired, encourage kids by offering a prize of Alley Cash to the kids whose cut-outs are the closest match.**

- When finished, let kids place their hands on the cut-outs their partners made.
- Determine which ones closely match their actual hand. (*Award prizes if desired.*)
- Let kids compare handprint cut-outs and arrange themselves in order from the largest to the smallest.
- Beginning with the kid whose handprint is the largest, let kids take turns sharing about an opportunity they have had recently in which they were able to lend a hand, meet a need, or step up and help in some way.
  - Did they enjoy doing it?
  - Was it a task they were made to do or was it something they did without being asked?
  - Was the job their responsibility or were they doing it for someone else?
  - Were they rewarded or thanked or was it something no one (except God) noticed?
- If time allows, let kids compare handprints to find one that most closely matches theirs then invite them to pair up with and find out what chores or responsibilities that they both have in common.

## 4. Discussion Questions

### Ask:

- Sometimes we ignore a job that needs to be done because it’s not technically OUR responsibility—not OUR problem. Is there anything wrong with that way of thinking? Why or why not?
  - How would things be different if Jesus had taken on that way of thinking?
- When you think of people who have shown initiative (*seen what needs to be done and doing it*), who comes to mind? What do you appreciate or admire most about them? What can you learn from them?
- What can you do 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?

## 5. Verses to Take with You

**What You Need:** Bibles, note cards, pens

### What You Do:

- Ask kids to look up Colossians 3:23a.
- Hand out the note cards and pens.

- Appoint one of the kids to slowly say the verse as kids write it out on their cards. (The kid saying the verse should also write it out.)
- Say the verse together as a group to help kids learn it. They can read it from their card if they need help.
- Challenge kids to say the verse as a group—each kid saying one word at a time.
  - The catch is that they must speak in random order, not around a circle or in any particular order.
  - If two kids speak at the same time or if there is more than a two-second pause between the words, they must start over.
  - Kids can speak as many times as they like but all kids must participate.
- Choose someone to begin and then let kids take some “calculated initiative” to recite the memory verse.
- Kids can look at their note cards if they need help remembering the verse.
- Think through the meaning of the verse.
  - In Colossians 3:23a, do you think the word *everything* literally means EVERYTHING? Explain why or why not.
  - What are some examples of the “everythings” we do?
  - How can we do each of those things as if working for the Lord?
  - What does it look like to do some of the following activities as if “working for the Lord” AND what it looks like to not?
    - school work
    - playing a sport
    - helping at home
    - going to church
    - hanging out with friends
- Remind kids that we can show initiative by stepping up to help wherever we can to get a job done. When we do it without complaining, without being asked, without applause, and without a selfish motive, we’re doing it for the Lord.

## 6. Make it Personal with Prayer

**What You Need:** No supplies needed

### What You Do:

- Ask kids to name some ways in which they can take initiative this week.
- After they have shared, suggest that prayer is an important way to show initiative. Seeing a need and praying for God’s help is exactly what Nehemiah did.
- Challenge kids to put initiative into practice and lead the others in a one or two sentence prayer asking God’s help this week to not only SEE a need but DO something about it.
- Close in prayer.

### What You Say:

Dear God, just as Nehemiah came to You for help, we want to do the same. Help us to recognize opportunities to show initiative. When we see a need, help us to not make excuses for not helping. Instead, remind us that EVERYTHING we do can be done for You. Amen.