

City SG—September 18th-20th, 2021

Today's Bible Story: Ain't No Stoppin' Us Now (Nehemiah and Sanballat) • *Nehemiah 2:19-20, 4, 6*

Today's Bottom Line: Stay focused on what needs to be done.

Monthly Memory Verse: *Work at everything you do with all your heart. Work as if you were working for the Lord.* Colossians 3:23a (NIRV)

1. Opening Activity

What You Need: Ball pit balls, pigs, bucket

What You Do:

- Instruct kids to partner up.
- Challenge the kids to have a staring contest.
- Direct the winners from each pair to move on to the next round by partnering up with another winner and competing again in another staring contest.
- Add one of the challenges listed below to each round.
- Repeat the rounds of staring contests until there is only one pair left and you can determine a winner.

Round #1 Staring contest

Round #2 Staring contest while standing on one foot

Round #3 Continue staring while on one foot as the kids who have lost distract them by rotating around them like the earth rotates around the sun

Round #4 Staring contest while standing on one foot with hand on head while the kids who aren't competing toss "ball pit balls" to each other next to the competitors

Round #5 Staring contest while standing on one foot, hand on head, their other hand rubbing their belly, while other kids are squeaking and throwing pigs into a bucket next to the competitors

What You Say:

"Wow! I can only imagine how hard it was to stay focused in each of those rounds! Which round do you think was the most challenging? (Allow time for responses.) **[Transition]** Today, we'll learn about someone who stayed focused on the really important mission God called him to. Let's head to Large Group now to hear more!"

2. Focused or Not

What You Need: No supplies needed

What You Do:

- Divide kids into two teams.
- Explain that you will share a scenario, then the teams will work together to act-out the scenario.
- Include a twist: one of the groups will have to act-out the scenario as "distracted" while the other group will act-out the scenario as "focused."
- If the group is the "distracted" group, instruct them to think about what could distract them and what it looks like to be distracted from what they should be doing.
- Share an example.
 - I need to feed the dog and get him water before I go to school. But I'm distracted by my dog's new really cool toy. Instead of feeding him, I take him outside and play with him and his new toy. Then I'm distracted from feeding him because I have to get ready for school. Then I'm distracted because the bus shows up. By the time I get to school, I realize I never fed the dog!
- Encourage the kids to be funny and creative (and appropriate!).

- If the group is the “focused” group, encourage them to act-out how to do the task at hand efficiently and thoroughly.
- Before you read a scenario, tell the teams which one will be focused and which one will be distracted.
- As you progress through the scenarios, alternate which team is distracted and which one is focused.
- Continue until all scenarios have been acted out or as time and interest allow.
- Once all scenarios have been read and acted out, discuss the scenarios that were acted out.
- Wrap up and ask:
 - Have you ever been distracted or focused while doing any of those things?
 - What are some other ways we could potentially be distracted from things we need to do?

“Focused or Not” Scenarios:

1. Completing a really difficult math test
2. Brushing your teeth
3. Doing assigned reading from school
4. Picking up around the house
5. Feeding and getting water for the dog
6. Choosing to eat lunch at school with someone who doesn’t usually eat with anyone
7. Clearing the table after dinner at home

What You Say:

“Those were some amazing acting skills on both the focused and distracted sides of our scenarios! Thanks for reminding us how to stay focused—and how not to!

“One way I like to stay focused is by creating small goals for myself each week. This week, I want to challenge you to set a goal for yourself. You could even pick one of our examples we talked about today. Actually brush your teeth when you’re asked to, without getting distracted; or finish your reading for school without leaving your reading spot until you’re done. Write down your goal on a sheet of paper and put it somewhere you’ll see it every day. Then come back and tell us how you did next week! I’m going to do the same thing. My goal for this week is ***[Make It Personal] (share one goal you will make for yourself)***. You’ll have to come back next week to see if I chose to ***[Bottom Line] stay focused on what needs to be done.***”

[Make it Personal] (Share about a time you remained focused on a goal or job that God set before you and how it paid off in the end since you chose to stay focused.)

3. Bible Story Tower Review

What You Need: Plastic cups (20 per group)

What You Do:

- Divide your group into two teams.
- Give each team an equal number of cups.
- Demonstrate how to stack cups in a pyramid formation to create a strong tower.
- Tell kids that you will ask questions about today’s Bible story, and each team will have a chance to answer.
- Each time a team answers correctly, direct *both* teams to add a new cup to their tower.
- The goal is for both teams to build the tallest tower they can before it falls.

Bible Story Review Questions

1. What was wrong with the walls around the city of Jerusalem? *(They were broken down, leaving the city unprotected.)*
2. What did Nehemiah do about the broken-down walls? *(He gathered the people in the city to rebuild the wall.)*
3. People from neighboring nations weren't happy about Jerusalem rebuilding the wall. Why? *(Because if the wall was rebuilt, the people living there could defend themselves again.)*
4. What did Nehemiah do when Sanballat and Tobiah laughed and made fun of the people as they worked on the wall? *(Nehemiah did not get upset. He kept working.)*
5. How did Sanballat and Tobiah feel when the people started to make progress on the wall? *(They weren't happy! They made fun of the people working to try to get them to stop.)*
6. When the people heard Sanballat and Tobiah making fun of them, did they stop working or keep going? *(They kept going.)*
7. When Sanballat tried to get Nehemiah to stop working, how many times did Nehemiah message him with a NO: two times, three times, or five times? *(five times)*
8. Even when Sanballat made up stories about Nehemiah, did Nehemiah keep going? *(Yes, Nehemiah trusted God and kept working.)*
9. How many days did it take to rebuild the wall and the gates around the city: 25 days, 52 days, or 552 days? *(52 days)*
10. Today, we learned to "stay focused on what needs to be _____." *(Done)*

What You Say:

"Can you believe it? They finished the wall! Think about ALL the work it took to finish such a big job! And not only that, they had all these distractions. Sanballat and Tobiah tried as hard as they could to get them to stop working. But Nehemiah he was doing something great, So he couldn't lose focus and stop working! Nehemiah chose to **[Bottom Line] stay focused on what needs to be done.** And because he stayed focused, they rebuilt the walls and towers and gates."

[Make it Personal] (Tell the kids about a time you finished a BIG task. Maybe you completed a big home improvement project or finished a degree. Talk about the distractions along the way and how you chose to stay focused so you could get the job done.)

4. Pray and Dismiss

What You Say:

"Let's bow our heads so we can focus on talking to God!

"Heavenly Father, we love You. Just like You helped Nehemiah stay on task when he had a big job to do, please help us **[Bottom Line] stay focused on what needs to be done.** This week, when we get distracted, help us keep going and finish what we start. We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen."