

City SG—September 25th-27th, 2021

Today's Bible Story: I Just Want to Celebrate (The Wall Is Rebuilt) • *Nehemiah 3–4, 6:15-16, 8:1-17*

Today's Bottom Line: Look for ways to celebrate what God has 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. Put a Praise on It!

What You Need: “Put a Praise on It!” Page (1 per kid) markers, scissors, plastic sandwich bags (1 per kid)

What You Do:

- Give every kid a “Put a Praise on It!” Activity Page, pair of scissors, and one plastic sandwich bag.
- Set out the markers.
- Instruct kids to decorate their coupons with markers.
- Direct kids to cut out their coupons and place them inside their sandwich bag to use throughout the week.
- Encourage kids to be on the lookout for ways to celebrate what God has done through the people around them this upcoming week.
- Each time they see God doing something good, tell them to write it down on their praise coupons and hang the coupon somewhere they can look at it all week long as they continue to remember what God has done.
- Remind kids that God is always working for the good of those who love Him, which means there's always something He's doing that they can celebrate!
- Once the kids have decorated and cut out their coupons, ask if they saw anyone showing initiative in the past week.
- Allow time for kids to share stories and encourage them to write something down on their first coupon.

What You Say:

“There are so many reasons to praise God if you just choose to **[Bottom Line] look for ways to celebrate what God has done.** Maybe you make a new friend this week and see God providing friends for you. Maybe you did well on your spelling test. You can thank God for giving you a brain and helping you remember how to spell your words. What if you celebrate God for giving you a home to live in, food on your table, or shoes on your feet—even if they aren't the ones you wish you had?

“We could also praise God for what He did by taking initiative and sending Jesus so we can have a relationship with Him. You can always **[Bottom Line] look for ways to celebrate what God has done. [Make it Personal] (Share about a time you celebrated what God has done in your life.)** This week, let's take initiative and look out for what God is up to and 'put a praise on it' every time we see Him in action!”

2. Celebrating God's Work

What You Need: Bibles, coupons from “Put a Praise on It!” Activity, and pen

What You Do:

- Ask any kids if they know the memory verse by heart and invite them to share it out loud.
- Give each kid a Bible.
- Look up Colossians 3:23 as a group and read it out loud.
- Hand each kid a pen.
- Ask kids to get one coupon from their praise coupon bag and think of a way that God has worked through them as they have shown initiative this week. Then they write it on the coupon.
- Remind kids that the second part of this month's memory verse says, “Work as if you were working for the Lord.”

- Discuss how it is important to recognize when God is working through us and to thank God for giving us what we need to show initiative.
- Encourage kids to continue working for the Lord this week like our memory verse tells us!

What You Say:

"I love getting to hear the different ways God is using you, friends! But remember, we are working for the Lord. That means all of the praise, glory, and honor goes to Him! Even when we show initiative and do hard work, we can still celebrate God's work through us and everything He has given to us to make it possible. This week, I want you to **[Bottom Line]** look for ways to celebrate what God has done even in the midst of showing initiative!"

3. Watch Out for That Black Hole!

What You Need: "Memory Verse Cards", Bible marked at Colossians 3:23, Black Construction Paper Holes (10 per Group, 5 per Team)

What You Do:

- Invite a kid to open the Bible to Colossians 3:23.
- Read the memory verse out loud to the kids.
- Divide the group into two teams.
- Shuffle each set of memory verse cards and place them in two piles on one end of your small group area.
- Line up the two teams on the opposite side of your small group area.
- Set up 5 "Black Holes" (Black Construction Paper), for each team, that each team will have to weave in and out of.
- One at a time, direct a kid from each team to run to collect a memory verse card, weaving in and out of the black holes along the way, then run back to tag the next kid in line.
- If a kid steps on a black hole, call "STOP" and send that kid back to the starting line to run again.
- Once the team has collected all their cards, direct them to work together to put them in order, sit down, and raise their hands to signal they are finished.
- The first team to get all of their cards in the correct order with their hands in the air, wins!
- **Variations could include: Hopping on one foot, Crab Walking, Walking Backwards, etc.**
- Play a few rounds as time and interest allows.

What You Say:

"That was SUPER fun! You had to pay attention and look out for those black holes. All month long, we've been talking about showing initiative—seeing what needs to be done and doing it! And our verse reminds us that whatever we do, we should do it with all our hearts. Taking time to celebrate and thank God for all He's done for us is part of initiative, too! This week, let's **[Bottom Line]** look for ways to celebrate what God has done."

4. This or That?

What You Need: No supplies needed

What You Do:

- Instruct kids to stand in the middle of your space.
- Tell them to think about what they like to do at parties.
- Let them know you will give them a set of choices, party-style.
- If a kid prefers option one, they run to the wall to the right.
- If a kid prefers option two, they run to the wall to the left.
 - If your space doesn't have walls, instruct the kids to run to the right side of the space or to the left side of the space.
- Continue until all options have been read or as time and interest allow.

- If you choose, invite kids to take turns being the leader and reading one set of options.
- If you have extra time, invite the kids to come up with their own options.

Two Corners Party-Style options:

- Round 1: ZOOM™ party or drive-through party
- Round 2: Cookie cake or ice cream cake
- Round 3: Summer party or winter party
- Round 4: Party with friends or party with family
- Round 5: Fancy clothes party or pajama party
- Round 6: Confetti or sprinkles
- Round 7: Party at your house or party somewhere else
- Round 8: One big gift or lots of small gifts
- Round 9: Sharing the same birthday with your best friend or having the day all to yourself
- Round 10: Chocolate cake or vanilla cake
- Round 11: Big birthday breakfast or big birthday dinner
- Round 12: Staying home from school on your birthday or taking cupcakes to school and celebrating with your friends
- Round 13: Themed party or no theme
- Round 14: Big party or small party
- Round 15: Cupcakes or regular cake

What You Say:

“I like your style, friends! Whether you prefer a huge, fancy party or a small get together with friends, parties are always fun because you are celebrating something special! We celebrate because we are excited and thankful! **[Transition] Today, we learned why we always have a reason to celebrate!**”

5. Pray and Dismiss

What You Do:

- Gather the kids together for prayer.
- Explain that prayer is one way to remind ourselves of all that God has done and to celebrate His goodness.
- Remind the kids that just as God was with Nehemiah as he rebuilt the wall, He is with us today. God is always faithful.
- Close the group with the following prayer.
- Encourage the kids to silently fill in the blanks below when you pause.

What You Say:

“When I talk to God, it reminds me just how big and powerful He is. When I take time to stop and thank God for all He’s done, it reminds me that He is faithful, always. Let’s pray together. When you hear me pause, I want you to silently fill in the blank. As we talk to God this week, let’s remember to be specific about what we are thankful for so we can **[Bottom Line] look for ways to celebrate what God has done.**

“Heavenly Father, You are _____. Thank You for loving us and for _____. Help us show initiative this week so we can see what needs to be done and to do it. Thank You for sending Jesus! It’s in His name we pray. Amen.”