

City SG—September 4th-6th, 2021

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

Today's Bottom Line: Don't wait for someone else to do 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. Don't Go Halfsies!

What You Need: "Don't Go Halfsies" ½ Sheets (1 set per group, per service), masking tape, and Bibles

What You Do:

- Divide your group into pairs and make sure each pair has a Bible.
- Look up and read this month's memory verse together, using the instructions below.

Finding verses with 1st through 3rd graders: Guide them to open their Bibles to the front and find the table of contents. Hold up a Bible opened to the table of contents to show the kids what the page looks like. When the kids find the table of contents, lead them to find Colossians in the list under "New Testament." When the kids find Colossians, lead them to look at the page number beside the word. Explain that the number tells them on what page they can find Colossians. Help the kids find the page. When they find Colossians, explain that the big numbers on the page are the chapter numbers. Help them find chapter 3. Explain that the small numbers are verse numbers. Help them find verse 23 in chapter 3.

- Recite the verse several times as a group.
- Tape an activity page on every kid's back, making sure they don't see what picture you give them.
- Instruct kids not to reveal what they see on each other's backs.
- Make sure each kid has someone in the group with a match to their picture. If you have an odd number of kids, tape a picture to your back and play with the group.
- Direct the kids to go around and give clues about the item that is taped on each other's backs without giving away what the item is.
- The goal is for every kid to guess what is taped to their back *and* to find the other kid who has the other half of the item on their back.
- Play until everyone has guessed what their item is and found their other half.

What You Say:

"A whole candy bar is way better than half of a candy bar, right? Our verse today tells us that working with our whole heart is better than just working with a little bit of our heart. In everything we do, we should give our whole hearts as if we do it for God Himself!

"Maybe our mom tells us to clean our room and we do it, but we do it with a bad attitude or we just put everything in a pile under the bed. Have you ever done that? (*Allow time for responses.*) This week, you should make an effort and **[Bottom Line] don't wait for someone else to do what needs to be done.** Let's remember that when we show initiative to the world around us, we work for God Himself!"

2. Show Me Initiative

What You Need: Buzzer (1 per group)

What You Do:

- Divide your group into two teams.
- Read a list of scenarios that require initiative.
- Instruct the groups to listen to the scenario and work together to come up with a solution. Then each team chooses one kid to speed walk (not run!) as fast as a rocket to you, ring the buzzer, and share the solution!

- Explain that the team who wins may not necessarily be the first to ring the buzzer, but will be the team who came up with the most creative solution.
- After each scenario, determine which team wins a point based on the creativity of their answer.
- Once you've read through all the scenarios, invite the group to a bonus round where they come up with their own problem and a solution to that problem.

Initiative scenarios:

1. Your classmate needs help understanding a math problem.
2. It's spaghetti night at your house and your little brother made a complete mess on the table and walls!
3. All of your friends in the neighborhood want to ride bikes, but your neighbor doesn't have a bike.
4. A kid in your class forgot his pencil box, but no one wants to let him borrow a pencil because he loses them.
5. You see a group of kids making fun of someone.
6. Your mom has worked all day and is really tired, but your little sister wants a lot of attention.
7. You notice a kid at school never brings a coat to wear outside at recess.
8. You notice a kid in your class always plays by himself at the park.

What You Say:

"We sure have some creative thinkers in our group! I loved hearing all of the ideas you had about how to show initiative to solve a problem you see.

"Showing initiative isn't just the right thing to do, it can really help others get out of a problem they find themselves in. When you show initiative to help a classmate pick up the books he dropped, he'll feel less embarrassed about dropping them. When you help your dad clean-up after dinner time, he won't be stuck doing it all by himself. When we don't show initiative, those people are left getting things done by themselves.

"God didn't make you a creative problem-solver so that you can sit back and watch a problem pass you by. God has wired you to be bold and dare to walk towards the mission He set before you. He can use you to change the world through changing your classroom, your home, your church, or even your neighborhood.

[Bottom Line] Don't wait for someone else to do what needs to be done. Show initiative this week in every opportunity God gives you." **[Make it Personal] (Share about a time you showed initiative with something small and it helped someone in a big way.)**

3. Would You Rather?

What You Need: No supplies needed

What You Do:

- Instruct kids to stand in a circle.
- Tell kids you'll read a list of some missions, and they'll choose which mission they'd rather accept.
- One at a time, read the "would you rather" missions below.
- Instruct the kids to stay standing if they'd rather do option A and sit down if they'd rather do option B.
- After each round, let a few kids briefly explain why they chose their option.
- Continue until all "would you rather" missions have been read.
- If time allows, invite the kids to come up with their own "would you rather" missions.

Would You Rather:

1. Would you rather pick up your dog's poop in the yard or clean out your cat's litter box?
2. Would you rather do the laundry or do the dishes?
3. Would you rather stay late after school and help your teacher clean the classroom or help clean the cafeteria after a food fight?
4. Would you rather clean your room without being told or surprise your parents by getting dinner started?
5. Would you rather make everyone's bed or pick up all the scattered toys in the family room?

6. Would you rather clean up trash on the playground or invite someone new to sit at lunch with you?

What You Say:

“Seeing the different choices you each made was fun! Has anyone ever completed those missions in real life? *(Allow time for responses.)* Does that mean some of you have dogs or cats? *(Allow time for responses and let kids share about their pets.)* Very cool, everyone! **[Transition] Today in Large Group, we learned just how important it is to step up and make choices to help just like these!**”

4. A Plan to Build

What You Need: No supplies needed.

What You Do:

- Divide your kids into two teams.
- Points are earned when a team answers a review question correctly.
- Give teams two points for each correct answer.
- Each round, ask each team a different question from the list below.
- Encourage the kids to work together as a group to answer the question.
- The first group to get 8 points for their team, wins!
- If both teams get 8 points in the same round, both teams win!

Review Questions:

Round 1:

1. What was Nehemiah’s job? *(cupbearer to the king)*
2. What big problem did Nehemiah see that he needed to show initiative to help fix? *(The wall of Jerusalem was broken and the people there needed help.)*

Round 2

3. How did Nehemiah feel when he heard that Jerusalem’s wall was broken? *(sad)*
4. Why were walls important to a city? *(They protected a city from invaders.)*

Round 3

5. What was the first thing Nehemiah did before he went and spoke to the king? *(He prayed and asked God for help.)*
6. What did the king say when Nehemiah asked to leave and go to Jerusalem to rebuild the city’s walls? *(He could go.)*

Round 4

7. What did Nehemiah ask the king for to help him build the city walls? *(letters so he could travel safely and get supplies)*
8. Did Nehemiah check out the city walls during the day or at night? *(at night)*

Round 5

9. Rebuilding the wall was a big task. But who did Nehemiah tell the people would help them build the wall? *(God)*
10. Did the people of Jerusalem decide to help to rebuild the wall? *(Yes!)*

What You Say:

“Great job getting creative and building those walls! You guys didn’t let the lack of normal building supplies get in your way. Just like Nehemiah, you saw a job that needed to be done and made it happen.

“When Nehemiah heard Jerusalem’s walls were torn down, he could have easily backed down from the job. But he made a choice to push forward and figure out how to accomplish the huge mission God set before him.

“Now, you probably won’t see too many walls that need rebuilt this week. But you and I have the opportunity to show initiative all throughout our week. Maybe you think that helping around the house or being kind to someone isn’t as important as what Nehemiah faced, but the truth is, every mission God gives us is important and makes a difference with the people around us. You can either say yes to the mission or let it pass you by. This week, **[Bottom Line] don’t wait for someone else to do what needs to be done.** Say yes to whatever needs done no matter how big or small.”

5. Pray and Dismiss

What You Need: Index cards and markers

What You Do:

- Give every kid an index card.
- Set out markers to share.
- Encourage kids to think of one of the missions from the Opening Activity. Re-read them to refresh their memories!
- Instruct kids to choose one of those scenarios to show initiative this week and encourage them to write it on their index card.
- Invite kids to decorate their index cards with rocket ships and scenes from space to remind them of the mission they are launching into this week!
- Remind the kids to report back next week so they can tell their group how showing initiative went for them.
- Close your group time in prayer.

What You Say:

“Dear God, thank You for inviting us to Your work in this world! Whether the work is big or small, it’s exciting to be on Your team as we launch into the many ways we can do something that needs to be done. As we find ways to show initiative this week, remind us **[Bottom Line] don’t wait for someone else to do what needs to be done.** We love You, and we ask these things in Jesus’ name. Amen!”

As adults arrive to pick up, encourage kids to show off their index cards and prompt them to share how they plan to show initiative this week! Remind them that when they see something that needs to be done this week, **[Bottom Line] don’t wait for someone else to do what needs to be done.**