



## GETTING READY

### 1. Opener/Closer

#### What You Need:

- Host
- Two small groups
- Table
- Two baby dolls
- Four diapers
- Two onesies
- Package of baby wipes
- Bottle of baby powder

#### *Large Group Visuals:*

- Theme Slide
- Initiative Slide
- Blank Bottom Line Slide
- Bottom Line Slide

#### What You Do:

- Put a diaper and a onesie on each baby doll.
- Set the two baby dolls on a table on stage (one baby doll on each side). Put the baby wipes, baby powder, and two new diapers in the middle.

## 2. Bible Story

### What You Need:

- Storyteller
- Bible
- Six medium-large boxes, all roughly the same size
- Gray paint or spray paint

### *Large Group Visuals:*

- Blank Bottom Line Slide
- Bottom Line Slide

### What You Do:

- Decorate the six boxes using the gray paint/spray paint to look like stones used to build a wall.
- Scatter the six boxes on one side of the stage.
- *NOTE: Be sure to keep these boxes, because you'll use them again in future weeks.*

## 3. Worship

### What You Need:

- We Are Royals
- Through It All

# If I Had a Hammer

**Bible Story:** If I Had a Hammer (Nehemiah Hears about the Wall) • *Nehemiah 1:1–2:9*

**Bottom Line:** Be on the lookout for what needs to be done.

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

**Life App:** Initiative—Seeing what needs to be done and doing it

**Basic Truth:** I need to make the wise choice.

## **Story: Communicating God’s Truth in Engaging Ways (Large Group, 35 minutes)**

Engage kids’ hearts through a dynamic and interactive Bible story, worship, and prayer experience in a Large Group setting.

**SFX:** *Play high-energy music as kids enter.*

**CG:** *Theme Slide*

*Host is on stage, welcoming the kids as they enter.*

### **Opener**

**HOST:** “Hey, hey, friends! It’s another awesome day in [your environment’s name], and I’m so glad you’re here! My name is [Host’s name], and today is going to be super fun. Do me a favor. If you like having fun with friends, look at the person sitting beside you, give them a high-five, and say, ‘Let’s do this!’”

**HOST and KIDS:** *(High-five someone in the audience.)* “Let’s do this!”

**HOST:** “I love it! This month we’re talking about a word that I bet most of us haven’t heard before. It’s ‘initiative.’ Can you say that with me?”

**HOST and KIDS:** “Initiative.”

**HOST:** “Let’s take a look and see what initiative means.”

**CG:** *Initiative Slide*

**“Initiative is seeing what needs to be done and doing it.**

“Even if you haven’t heard that word before, I bet you’ve taken initiative lots of times. Raise your hand if you’ve ever seen some trash on the floor or the ground and you’ve thrown it away. *(Pause for response.)*”

“Okay, how about this? How many of you have seen one of your favorite toys or games where it isn’t supposed to be, and you picked it up and put it away? *(Pause for response.)*”

“All right, all right. Let’s do one more. How many of you have seen a person sitting alone or playing alone and you went and hung out with them? *(Pause for response.)* That’s great! See? A lot of you are already taking initiative.

“It’s not always easy to see what needs to be done and do it. You might get distracted. You might think, ‘Someone else will do it.’ Or maybe the thing that needs to be done is just plain icky. There are a lot of dirty jobs around you every day—like throwing your dirty clothes in the hamper or clearing your dishes from the table. YOU can take initiative and make them happen.

**SFX: Upbeat game music**

“That music means it’s game time! Today’s game is called ‘I Need You, Baby,’ and it’s all about the dirty job of changing diapers! Changing diapers is NOT super fun. It’s definitely a dirty job. But hey—somebody’s got to do it!

“I need two small groups to play this game.

*Choose two entire small groups that have about the same number of kids. Bring both groups behind the table so the audience can see what they’re doing.*

*(To the two groups)* “Let’s see which group can do the dirty job of changing a baby’s diaper the fastest.

*As you describe what to do, act out each step and point to the wipes, powder, etc.*

“As a group, you’ll work together to take off the baby’s clothes, take off the diaper, wipe the baby’s bottom, powder the bottom, put a new diaper on, then put the clothes back on. The first group to finish wins!

“Groups ready? On your marks, get set, go!

**SFX: Bring up music**

*Cheer on both teams as they change the babies. Encourage the audience to cheer for them as well.*

“Okay, okay! We have a winner! Let’s hear it for both groups! *(To both groups)* All of you definitely know how to do a dirty job! You can have a seat.

*Send the two groups back to their seats.*

“That was awesome. But the awesome doesn’t stop there. Let’s stand up and sing some songs together!”

## Announcements

*Use this as an example of what to say. Make it your own and help the kids feel welcomed. Then take a moment to share any/all announcements.*

**HOST:** “I’m so excited to be here with all of you today and get a little crazy! If it’s your first time here, I want to welcome you and I would love to have a chance to meet you, get a high five and show you around. Here at Mission, we believe that this is a place for you and you belong here no matter who you are or what you believe. Mission is for YOU!

I have just a few announcements for you all today...

*Share any/all announcements.*

Now let’s all stand up, get close, give someone a high five and let’s sing and worship together!

*Host exits and Worship Leader enters.*

## Worship

**WORSHIP LEADER:** “Thank you, *[Name of Host]*. Let’s get up and get loud as we sing and dance for who God is and what he’s done for us!

### *We are Royals*

**WORSHIP LEADER:** “That was amazing! *(Take a moment to say something about the next song)*. So let’s give everything we have and worship God together!

### *Through It All*

*Storyteller enters as Worship Leaders exit.*

### *CG: Blank Bottom Line Slide*

## SETTING UP THE STORY

**STORYTELLER:** “Hey, everyone! I’m *[Storyteller’s name]*, and I can’t wait to tell you about a man who knew all about initiative. *(Hold up Bible.)* His name was Nehemiah.

“The first thing you need to know was that Nehemiah had a pretty interesting job. His job was to be the drink tester for the king of Susa. This king had an interesting name: Artaxerxes. We’ll just call him king Art. Is that cool?

“So Nehemiah was living in Susa, but that’s not where his family had come from. They were from a town called Jerusalem. But something pretty sad had happened to Jerusalem.

“The city had been completely ruined—totally destroyed! Most of the people who lived there had to leave. When our story starts, a few of them had been allowed to return to Jerusalem, but the city was in

really bad shape.”

### **HANANI VISITS NEHEMIAH**

**STORYTELLER:** “One day, Nehemiah’s brother visited him. Nehemiah’s brother had another name you don’t hear a lot nowadays. His name was Hanani. Hanani had come to tell Nehemiah some really bad news.

*Walk to the scattered boxes and point.*

“The wall that had been built around Jerusalem had been completely torn down, and its gates had been burned by fire. In other words, the wall that kept them safe was not a wall anymore.

*Nudge a box toward the center of the stage.*

“That meant that ANYONE at ANY TIME could come into Jerusalem and hurt the people who were there building the temple.

“Hanani told Nehemiah that the people were ashamed. That means they were deeply embarrassed. They were having a very hard time, because the wall that was supposed to keep them safe was broken.

### **NEHEMIAH HAS A PLAN**

**STORYTELLER:** “Nehemiah was so sad to hear this about the people in his family’s hometown. The Bible says he cried for days. He couldn’t even eat. Then he prayed to God.

“Listen to what Nehemiah said to God.

*Open the Bible to Nehemiah 1:5, 11 and read.*

*“LORD, you are the God of heaven. You are a great and wonderful God. . . . Lord, please pay careful attention to my prayer. Listen to the prayers of all of us. We take delight in bringing honor to your name. Give me success today when I bring my request to King Artaxerxes, (NIRV).*

*Walk to the box you kicked and pick it up.*

“Nehemiah knew SOMETHING had to be done. So he took initiative. He decided to do something about it.”

*Place the box center stage.*

### **NEHEMIAH APPROACHES THE KING**

**STORYTELLER:** “Nehemiah decided to ask King Art if he could go to Jerusalem. When Nehemiah went to the king, the king could tell that Nehemiah was sad. And Nehemiah had never been sad in front of King Art before.

*Pick up another box and place it beside the first box.*

“The king asked Nehemiah if he was sick. Nehemiah was really afraid, but he told the king why he

looked so sad.

*Pick up another box and place it beside the second box.  
(You should have three in a row now.)*

“Nehemiah told him the terrible story about the city’s wall. Nehemiah said: *If it pleases you . . . Let me go to the city of Jerusalem. . . . I want to rebuild it (Nehemiah 2:4, NIV).*

*Pick up another box and place it on top of the first one.*

“Nehemiah also asked King Art for letters that would help him get to Jerusalem safely.

*Pick up another box and place it on top of the second one.*

“AND he asked King Art for logs to build the wall. Nehemiah must have really trusted God to answer his prayer!”

*Pick up another box and hold onto it.*

### **WRAPPING UP THE STORY**

**STORYTELLER:** “What do you think King Art said? If you think he said no, hold up a thumbs-down. If you think he said yes, hold up a thumbs-up. *(Pause for everyone to respond.)*

“Well . . .

*Place the last box on top of the third box, completing a mini-wall.*

“King Art said yes! He even ordered army officers and men riding horses to travel with Nehemiah to keep him safe.

“Nehemiah was someone who took initiative in a HUGE way. He saw what needed to be done and he did it. He heard about the broken-down walls of Jerusalem, and he was brave enough to ask the king to let him go help. *(Point to the mini-wall.)* At this point he hadn’t built anything yet. BUT he could see that rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem was what God wanted him to do. We’ll see in the next few weeks if he was able to do it!

“So, what does that mean for us?”

### **CG: Bottom Line Slide**

“Just like Nehemiah, we need to **[Bottom Line] be on the lookout for what needs to be done.**

“We need to keep our eyes open so we can see what needs to be done—at home, in our neighborhoods, or at school. Then we can decide to do something about it!

“Let’s pray together.”

**CG: Blank Bottom Line Slide**

### Pray

**STORYTELLER:** “God, Nehemiah’s story is pretty amazing. He was scared to take initiative, but he did it anyway. He prayed and trusted You to help him. We pray that You would make us more like him. Please help us to be on the lookout for what needs to be done, and please give us the courage to do it. We love you and we pray in Jesus’ name, amen.”

*Host enters as Storyteller exits.*

### Closer

**HOST:** “If you think about it, it must have been really tough for Nehemiah to go to the king the way he did. He was afraid to ask the king for such a BIG favor. But he knew that it wasn’t okay for Jerusalem to be in ruins; he knew that God wanted him to rebuild it. He **[Basic Truth] made the wise choice** and asked the king to let him help, because he trusted God.

“God can give YOU the courage you need to do what needs to be done—just like He did for Nehemiah. You can look and listen for things that need to be done. You can think of ways you can help. And you can ask God to help you.

**CG: Bottom Line Slide**

**[Bottom Line] “Be on the lookout for what needs to be done.**

“You might not be building any city walls anytime soon, but you can take initiative ANYWHERE. You can help your parents with the laundry. You can clear your dishes after meals. You can pick up trash when you see it and throw it away. You can **[Bottom Line] be on the lookout for what needs to be done.**

“You’ll talk some more in Small Group about how YOU can take initiative. Have fun!”

*Dismiss kids to their small groups.*

**SFX: Play high-energy music as the kids exit.**

**CG: Theme Slide**

**Optional CG (Media Package): Theme Loop Video**