

**GETTING READY**

1. **Welcome/Opener**

**What You Need:**

* Host
* Canned Sardines (3 cans)
* Paper towels

*Large Group Visuals:*

* Dirty JobsTheme Slide

**What You Do:**

* Each table will need to be big enough for three pies. One of the three pies on each table needs a single sardine buried deep within the creamy pie.
1. **Communicator Script**

**What You Need:**

* Communicator
* Bible
* Boxes for wall
	+ One box has some “party supplies” in it

*Music and Sound Effects (SFX):*

* Upbeat music to use as kids enter and exit the room

*Large Group Visuals:*

* Key Question Slide
* Blank Key Question Slide

**What You Do:**

* The boxes need to be all around the stage and amongst the mess. The boxes will need to be similar sized boxes to easily stack into a wall. We suggest bankers boxes or medium-sized moving boxes.
* Put the Party supplies in the boxes. Have one box of party supplies for each small group.
1. **Worship**

**What You Need:**

* Every Beat
* Alive Again**Rebuild This City**

**Bible Story:** Rebuild This City (Wall Is Rebuilt) • *Nehemiah 3–4*

**Key Question:** What is God doing in your life that you can celebrate?

**Bottom Line:** Look for ways to celebrate what God has 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: Dirty Jobs Theme Slide*

*Host enters.*

**Welcome**

*Stage has four tables set up before Host enters, equally spaced apart. Tables should be large enough to hold three pie trays and tall enough for a child to lean over onto it without too much difficulty. Host has lots of energy as he or she welcomes everyone to [Name of Environment]. Host is relatable and inviting. Host discusses recent/upcoming events: College Football Season Kickoff, NFL Season Kickoff, Labor Day, National Blueberry Popsicle Day, National Cheese Pizza Day, movie opening (Small Foot), a viral video on YouTube, etc. Host tells them how excited he or she is that they’re there and briefly runs through what they can expect. This is especially helpful for first-time guests to make them feel like they know what’s happening.*

**Opener**

**HOST:** “You know something, guys? I’m proud of us—ALL of us. All month long, we’ve been knocking out some pretty dirty jobs. We’ve cleaned the trash off the floor in this room. My litter boxes were graciously cleaned by some of you. There was the huge shoe debacle, and you found that mouth guard . . . in a trashcan . . . with the spaghetti noodles and Jell-O.”

And you know what else? I think that calls for a CELEBRATION! And if I’ve learned anything in my many years on this earth, it’s that there’s no better way to celebrate than with PIE. Except….. we couldn’t afford pies so… BRING IT OUT

*Host claps hands and volunteers bring out 3 sardine cans*

So here’s the deal… this is a pretty straight forward game. I’m gonna say 3-2-1- GO and then first person to eat all the sardines, wins a prize. Make sense? Perfect!

HERE WE GO… 3-2-1-GO!

*SFX: High-energy game music*

*Volunteers eat the sardines*

“Oh man, this places smells awful! But you all were champs.

**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!

*Every Beat*

**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!

*Alive Again*

*Communicator enters as Worship Leaders exit.*

**COMMUNICATOR SCRIPT**

**INTRODUCTION**

**COMMUNICATOR:** “Hey everyone. Answer this question in your head—what is your least favorite subject in school? It can be any class with any teacher, but it needs to be the one you dread. Everyone got a class? *(Pause for response.)* Great! Everyone circle up and share your least favorite class with your small group.”

*Communicator allows groups to briefly share their least favorite subject. Communicator gets input from the audience and affirms their responses.*

“For me, it was math. Always math! Language arts and social studies were a breeze, and science was actually pretty fun. But all those little . . . numbers and equations didn’t really add up for me, if you’ll pardon the pun. Math was the biggest roadblock from me getting on the honor roll.”

“When I was around your age, I was determined to overcome my hate for arithmetic and get on the honor roll by acing the first test of the year. The strategy I deployed was extensive. Every day after class, I stuck around to ask my teacher extra questions. I double-checked all my homework to get twice the number reps. At the Boys and Girls Club I used a tutor for extra help. I even met a new friend there who was in my grade and also disliked math. We worked well together. On top of all that, I asked God for help. And honestly, I prayed a lot. Growing up, I remember my parents telling me to go to God with my worries . . . and this was a big worry.”

“The day of the first exam arrived. All the questions seemed easy. I breezed through the questions quickly and confidently. Two days later, I got my test back. Anyone want to guess my grade? *(Pause for responses.)* I got a “C”! UGH! That was NOT the grade I prayed for. It was completely disappointing. I remember wondering how God could let my effort be rewarded with an underwhelming “C.” However, when I was sulking in self-pity, I felt like God reminded me it wasn’t a total bust. I had reason to celebrate—I didn’t fail, and I did better than I’d ever done before!”

**TENSION**

**COMMUNICATOR:** “Too many times in life I pray and pray to God but fail to thank Him for what He does in my life. Sure, I prayed long and hard for God to help me get a better grade that didn’t happen.”

“But God did help me focus my attention on math. This never happens! Now, did I thank God for giving me focus? Nope.”

“God placed a couple of patient adults in my life to answer my questions. Did I thank God for giving me mentors? I didn’t.”

“God also helped me meet a new friend whose loathe for math matched mine. But did I thank God for introducing me to a new friend? Sadly, I didn’t do that either.”

“Maybe you’re like me. It’s easy to go to God when we need something like our cat to get well or our friend’s family not to move away. Going to God when we want something like new football cleats or headphones is also easy. But it is hard to remember to celebrate all God does for us. I wonder why it’s so easy to overlook the great things God does in our lives.”

“Today we finish up talking about Nehemiah. Let’s check out what God did for His people and how they gave God credit.”

**TRUTH**

**COMMUNICATOR:** “To refresh everyone’s memory, Nehemiah was a cupbearer for the Persian King Artaxerxes. It was an important gig where he worked closely with the king to ensure nobody poisoned his drinks. Nehemiah was also an Israelite whose family was from Judah. However, more than 100 years before, Jerusalem, the capital city of Judah, was invaded, sending the Israelites into exile. Although Nehemiah had never seen Jerusalem, he had a huge heart for his people’s Holy City.”

*As Communicator speaks about the wall, she uses boxes around the stage to build up a “wall.”*

“Long before the invasion, Jerusalem was a thriving city with a rich history. It was the City of David where King Solomon built the Temple for God. Surrounding Jerusalem, they had a massive wall and thick, impenetrable gates. The wall would have served as a symbol of power and prevented enemies from attacking the city. Nehemiah would have grown up hearing stories of the Israelite kings who lived and defeated enemies from within the fortified city. For Israelites in exile, Jerusalem represented their national identity even though they did not live within the city walls.”

*Communicator has completed the wall of boxes.*

“You can imagine Nehemiah’s reaction when he learned from his brother, Hanani, the wall and gates of Jerusalem were still in ruin from the attack more than a century before.”

*Communicator completely destroys the wall of boxes.*

“Nehemiah was completely heartbroken, crying out to God for help! Though he did not live in Jerusalem, Israelites were beginning to move back into the city. With no wall or gates, the treasured city was vulnerable to attacks, raids, and wild animals. The people were exposed to losing their livelihoods and loved ones. The symbol of power and might that had existed long ago did not exist. More than a broken wall, Nehemiah knew it also meant broken lives.”

*As Communicator speaks about the wall, she uses boxes around the stage to build up a “wall.”*

“Nehemiah decided to take action. With letters offering safe passage and an army escort, Nehemiah received a blessing from King Artaxerxes to rebuild the wall and gates. Upon arrival, Nehemiah assessed the destruction and devised an ambitious plan. Their enemies taunted them and said the wall couldn’t be rebuilt. Finishing the wall involved *every* able-bodied Israelite to work together. While some worked on the wall or gates, others stood guard in case of an attack.”

*Communicator has completed the wall of boxes.*

“With God’s help, the people of Jerusalem completely rebuilt the massive wall in just 52 days. The feat was impressive . . . so impressive it scared their enemies. Check this out, *(Open Bible and read Nehemiah 6:16) ‘All our enemies heard about it. All the nations around us became afraid. They weren’t sure of themselves anymore. They realized that our God had helped us finish the work.’*”

“Isn’t that awesome?! They recognized under normal circumstances that the completion of the wall should have taken much, MUCH longer. However, God was with the Israelites, and it terrified all their enemies!”

“Upon the wall’s completion, hope for this nation was restored. Gatekeepers, singers, and Levites (the priests) were appointed. Hanani was put in charge of the city. Israelites in exile kept coming back to Judah and Jerusalem—and the restored walls lifted their spirits. A short time later, men, women and children gathered together and asked Ezra, the religious leader, to read God’s Word. As he read, the people responded in reverence. They lifted their hands saying, ‘Amen.’ The people bowed their faces down and worshipped the Lord with their faces in the dirt.”

“For hours, they listened to God’s Word being read to them, and they realized how far they had become from God. They started to get sad and cry because they were so upset. However, the leaders encouraged the crowd not to weep because they had happened to gather together on a joyous day . . . a national holiday . . . a day during a festival called the Feast of Booths. It was a day to celebrate, not to be sad!”

“Nehemiah spoke up and said, *(Open Bible and read Nehemiah 8:10) ‘“Go and enjoy some good food and sweet drinks. Send some of it to people who don’t have any. This day is holy to our Lord. So don’t be sad. The joy of the Lord makes you strong.”’*”

“And with that, the people began to celebrate the Feast of Booths. They built tents out of palm branches and lived in them. And they remembered how they had once lived in tents after God had rescued them from Egypt. They celebrated what God had done for them then and all that He had done for them now. They threw a huge party with laughing, food, and worship. God had done great things for them.”

**APPLICATION**

**COMMUNICATOR:** “At the beginning of this story, Nehemiah cried out to God for help. The problem was huge, and danger was imminent for the people of Jerusalem. Nehemiah jumped at the opportunity to help others, and God took the opportunity to show His power. Something very good happened to the Israelites, and they were made aware that God helped. And when they were told that God wanted them to celebrate, I love their reaction. They did! And they took the time to say thanks to God for all that He had done. Instead of ignoring God’s part in the work, they celebrated all of the good things God had done and honored Him.”

“Don’t miss this point. This is our job as well. Every day good things happen, and every day we should celebrate the good that comes from God. It’s true that you’re probably not building a massive stone wall around your house with God’s help. But there are days God makes it possible for you to meet a new friend. There are days God gives you the determination to complete a huge school project. There are days you have fun with your brothers and sisters. In those moments of good, don’t neglect your responsibility to celebrate and tell God thanks.”

“If nothing else, we can always celebrate God because of what He did for us when He sent His Son, Jesus, down to earth. Jesus lived a perfect life without sin. He spoke words of wisdom and performed many miracles we can still read about today. When He died on the cross, He paid the price of our sins and gave us new, clean hearts just like His. Through Jesus we can have a relationship with God, and THAT is a HUGE reason to celebrate.”

“God deserves our praise. So this morning, we feel like we should celebrate.”

**LANDING**

*Communicator opens one of the boxes filled with party supplies.*

**COMMUNICATOR:** “Each small group will receive a box. Let this box remind you of all the good God has done in your life and continues to do today. Inside each box you will find some party supplies. Let the party supplies remind you to celebrate all God does for you. As you head to your small group parties, think about this question.”

*CG: Key Question Slide*

**“What is God doing in your life that you can celebrate?** It doesn’t matter if it is big or small. It just matters that we celebrate! And don’t worry—there are no sardines in the boxes. Let’s pray and thank God for being so awesome!”

*CG: Blank Key Question Slide*

*Communicator leads group in a prayer related to what they just heard then dismisses them to small group.*

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

*CG: Theme Slide*