



## TODAY'S SUGGESTED SCHEDULE

### TODAY'S BIBLE STORY

**Ain't No Stoppin' Us Now**  
Nehemiah and Sanballat  
Nehemiah 2:19-20, 4, 6

### PRELUDE: Setting the tone for the experience

See the **Getting Ready** pages at the end of this document for a detailed description of what you'll need for today. In the **Prelude** folder of your curriculum, you'll find a variety of other resources to help you prepare.

### TODAY'S BOTTOM LINE

Stay focused on what needs to be done.

### SMALL GROUP

**15**  
MIN

#### SOCIAL: Providing time for fun interaction

Early Arriver  
Opening Activity

### 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

### LARGE GROUP

**35**  
MIN

#### ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- MONTHLY CHALLENGE - INITIATIVE
  - Shares stories each week with your groups that showed someone who has initiative.

### LARGE GROUP SUPPLIES

- Blue painter's tape
- Tan masking tape
- Large plastic bin (or similar container) to hold the ball pit balls
- Broom
- Lots of ball pit balls (at least 20 or 30)
- Aluminum foil (optional)
- Host's phone

#### WORSHIP:

- THE BEST IS YET TO COME  
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### SMALL GROUP

**25**  
MIN

### STORY SUPPLIES

- Table
- Viking helmet with horns
- Roman helmet
- Hard hat



**PRELUDE**      **SOCIAL**      **STORY**      **WORSHIP**      **GROUPS**      **HOME**

25 MINUTES

10 MINUTES

**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

**MONTHLY LIFE APP**

Initiative—Seeing what needs to be done and doing it

**BASIC TRUTH**

I can trust God no matter what.

**LARGE GROUP**

ENGAGE KIDS' HEARTS THROUGH A DYNAMIC AND INTERACTIVE BIBLE STORY, WORSHIP, AND PRAYER EXPERIENCE IN A LARGE GROUP SETTING.

**AUDIO: PLAY HIGH-ENERGY MUSIC AS KIDS ENTER.**  
**SLIDE: THEME**  
**OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME LOOP**

**WORSHIP**

*Worship Leaders enter*

**WORSHIP LEADER:**

**AUDIO: THE BEST IS YET TO COME**

**AUDIO: GRAVES INTO GARDENS**

*Host enters.*

**OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): COUNTDOWN (30- OR 60-SECOND VERSION)**

**OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME**

**OPENER**

**HOST:** "Hello, friends! How's it going? If you're having a good day so far, give me a thumbs-up like this. (*Demonstrate.*) Oh, good. I'm so glad. And it's about to get even better!

"I love it when we come to [your environment's name] and find out how we can live God's way, every day. One really cool way we can do that is by taking initiative.

**SLIDE: LIFE APP**

**OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME TRANSITION TO LIFE APP**

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



WEEK  
**THREE**  
SEPTEMBER 2021

LARGE GROUP  
**K-3**

**PRELUDE**      **SOCIAL**      **STORY**      **WORSHIP**      **GROUPS**      **HOME**

25 MINUTES

10 MINUTES

**SLIDE: THEME**

**OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): LIFE APP TRANSITION TO THEME**

“That means you don’t wait around for someone to TELL you to do things. You decide to do them yourself! You notice things that are messy, broken, or just not right . . . and you step up to make them better.

“I’ve got a fun way to start us off today with a game that ALL of you can play. And in case you’re wondering, it’ll take some initiative. I call it ‘Moon Rock Soccer!’

“As you can see, there’s a blue line dividing the room in half. That means all of you are a team (*point to one half of the room*), and all of you are a team (*point to the other half of the room*). When the game starts, I’ll toss out some of these ‘moon rocks.’ (*Hold up one of the ball pit balls.*) Without

using your hands, you’ll try to get all of the moon rocks to the other side of the blue line. (*Gently kick one of the ball pit balls across the blue line.*)

“But this is important: you must stay behind the tan line on your side. That way you can stay out of this middle section here, where all the moon rocks will be flying like crazy! Be sure to let everyone have a turn up front, too. Once you’ve kicked a moon rock up here at the line, head to the back and let someone else take your spot. Cool? Cool.

“When time runs out, I’ll say, ‘freeze,’ and everybody will freeze. (*Demonstrate.*) The team with the LEAST amount of moon rocks on their side wins that round. And remember, you can’t use your hands!

“Are you ready? (*Pause for response.*) Let’s play Moon Rock Soccer. Three, two, one, go!

**AUDIO: FUN INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC**

**OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): COUNTDOWN (30-SECOND VERSION)**

*If you’re not using a screen countdown, set a timer on your phone for 30 seconds.*

*Dump the container of ball pit balls into the center of the room, on top of the blue line. Use the broom to whisk them onto both sides, so the kids can get to them.*

*Comment on the action as the kids kick the “moon rocks.” Make sure they stay out of the middle section between the tape lines. Encourage them to rotate to the back and let everyone on the team have a chance to be up front.*

*After 30 seconds, you can declare a winner (if it’s obvious), but make sure to celebrate how well everyone played.*

*Move on to round two; but first, use the broom to whisk the “moon rocks” that are in the middle onto both sides.*



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**K-3**

**PRELUDE**      **SOCIAL**      **STORY**      **WORSHIP**      **GROUPS**      **HOME**

25 MINUTES

10 MINUTES

“Let’s play round two! Three, two, one, go!”

**AUDIO: FUN INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC**

**OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): COUNTDOWN (30-SECOND VERSION)**

*Set another 30-second timer. Comment on the action and encourage the kids as they play.*

“All right—for our third and final round, the game will go in reverse. I need all of you to try to kick the moon rocks up here, into this plastic bin. Once you’ve kicked yours in, go around the back of the room and see if you can find any more that we missed. Do you think we can get ALL of them back in here in 30 seconds? Let’s try it! Ready, set, go!”

**AUDIO: FUN INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC**

**OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): COUNTDOWN (30-SECOND VERSION)**

*Set another 30-second timer. Place your container on its side so it’s like a soccer goal. Encourage the kids as they kick all the “moon rocks” back into the container. (You can use the broom to help sweep them in as they get close.)*

**OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME LOOP**

“I love that game! I hope you did, too.”



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25 MINUTES

## BIBLE STORY

**SLIDE: THEME BACKGROUND**

*Storyteller enters as Worship Leaders exit.*

### SETTING UP THE STORY

**STORYTELLER:** “Hi, everyone! We’re continuing the story of Nehemiah today. *(Hold up Bible.)* We’ve already seen how God helped Nehemiah show initiative in a BIG way. Let’s recap where we’ve been so far.

“At first, Nehemiah was living in the land of Persia. But then he heard that the city walls of Jerusalem were broken down, which meant that God’s people there had no protection. Nehemiah decided to travel to Jerusalem. When he got there, he saw the broken-down walls for himself. He knew that somebody had to do SOMETHING . . . so he talked to the people, and they agreed to help him rebuild.

“There was a problem, though. The people in the lands around Jerusalem weren’t very happy about Nehemiah’s rebuilding project. They knew that if the wall of Jerusalem was rebuilt, the Jewish people would be able to defend themselves again.”

*Walk behind the table with the hats.*

### BIG MEANIES

**STORYTELLER:** “Two men in particular, named Sanballat and Tobiah, laughed and made fun of God’s people as they worked on the wall.

*Put on the Viking helmet.*

**AUDIO: “THE IMPERIAL MARCH (DARTH VADER’S THEME)” BY JOHN WILLIAMS, FROM 0:09-0:18**

*As the music plays, look around the room and point in the air with a scowl on your face. When the music stops, take off the Viking helmet.*

“But Nehemiah kept his cool and stayed calm. He trusted God. He didn’t let Sanballat and Tobiah distract him. You see, Nehemiah had a plan.

*Put on the Roman helmet.*

**AUDIO: “SUPERMAN RETURNS – MAIN TITLES” BY JOHN OTTMAN, FROM 0:26-0:43**

*As the music plays, cross your arms, smile, and nod. When the music stops, take off the Roman helmet.*

“Nehemiah gave each family or group a part of the wall to rebuild.

*Put on the hard hat.*



25 MINUTES

**AUDIO: "WE ARE FAMILY" BY SISTER SLEDGE, FROM 0:33-0:50**

*As the music plays, pretend to work (like you're swinging a big sledgehammer). Smile and give a thumbs-up. When the music stops, take off the hard hat.*

"Sanballat and Tobiah were shocked to see the people making progress on the wall. They made fun of the workers and said mean things about them.

*Put on the Viking helmet.*

**AUDIO: "THE IMPERIAL MARCH (DARTH VADER'S THEME)" BY JOHN WILLIAMS, FROM 0:09-0:18**

*As the music plays, look around the room and point in the air with a scowl on your face. When the music stops, take off the Viking helmet.*

"But Nehemiah didn't listen to those guys. Instead, he prayed to God.

*Put on the Roman helmet.*

**AUDIO: "SUPERMAN RETURNS - MAIN TITLES" BY JOHN OTTMAN, FROM 0:26-0:43**

*As the music plays, fold your hands and look up. When the music stops, take off the Roman helmet.*

"The people worked with all their heart, and they rebuilt the wall until it was half as high as they wanted it to be. They were making progress!"

**PLAN OF ATTACK**

**STORYTELLER:** "Sanballat and Tobiah tried to plan with other nations to attack Jerusalem before the wall could be finished.

*Put on the Viking helmet.*

**AUDIO: "THE IMPERIAL MARCH (DARTH VADER'S THEME)" BY JOHN WILLIAMS, FROM 0:09-0:18**

*As the music plays, look around the room and point in the air with a scowl on your face. When the music stops, take off the Viking helmet.*

"Nehemiah put guards in place, day and night. Still, the people were exhausted . . . there were broken stones in the way . . . and they had to worry about being attacked at any moment. So Nehemiah took initiative!

*Put on the Roman helmet.*

**AUDIO: "SUPERMAN RETURNS - MAIN TITLES" BY JOHN OTTMAN, FROM 0:26-0:43**



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PRELUDE

SOCIAL

STORY

WORSHIP

GROUPS

HOME

25 MINUTES

*As the music plays, rub your chin and point up like you're getting an idea. When the music stops, take off the Roman helmet.*

"Nehemiah stationed families at the weakest parts of the wall, armed with swords, spears, and bows.

*Put on the hard hat.*

**AUDIO: "WE ARE FAMILY" BY SISTER SLEDGE, FROM 0:33-0:50**

*As the music plays, do a "tough" boxing stance. When the music stops, take off the hard hat.*

"The people carried weapons, even as they worked. They had trumpets to sound an alarm if there was trouble. They worked until the wall was FINISHED . . . but they still had to fix the entrance gates."

### THE ANSWER IS NO

**STORYTELLER:** "Sanballat sent a message to Nehemiah, asking him to meet.

*Put on the Viking helmet.*

**AUDIO: "THE IMPERIAL MARCH (DARTH VADER'S THEME)" BY JOHN WILLIAMS, FROM 0:09-0:18**

*As the music plays, pretend to write a message, with a scowl on your face. When the music stops, take off the Viking helmet.*

"But Nehemiah knew that Sanballat meant to harm him. So he sent a message back.

*Open the Bible to Nehemiah 6:3 (NirV) and read.*

*"I'm working on a huge project. So I can't get away. Why should the work stop while I leave it? Why should I go down and talk with you?"*

*Put on the Roman helmet.*

**AUDIO: "SUPERMAN RETURNS - MAIN TITLES" BY JOHN OTTMAN, FROM 0:26-0:43**

*As the music plays, cross your arms, shake your head "no," and smile. When the music stops, take off the Roman helmet.*

"Sanballat sent the same message four times. He kept trying to get Nehemiah to meet so he could distract him. But every time, Nehemiah refused. Sanballat then sent the same message AGAIN . . . and he even threatened to tell the Persian king that Nehemiah was trying to make HIMSELF king. So Nehemiah sent a message back to Sanballat, basically saying, 'Nope. You're making that up.'

"But Sanballat still wasn't done!

*Put on the Viking helmet.*



25 MINUTES

**AUDIO: "THE IMPERIAL MARCH (DARTH VADER'S THEME)" BY JOHN WILLIAMS, FROM 0:09-0:18**

*As the music plays, look exasperated, like you're trying to think of something. When the music stops, take off the Viking helmet.*

"Sanballat hired a man named Shemaiah to try to trick Nehemiah. This man, Shemaiah, told Nehemiah that he should run and hide because men were coming to kill him. But Nehemiah saw right through the trick. He said he wouldn't hide. He trusted God and kept working.

*Put on the Roman helmet.*

**AUDIO: "SUPERMAN RETURNS - MAIN TITLES" BY JOHN OTTMAN, FROM 0:26-0:43**

*As the music plays, put your hands on your hips and look triumphant. When the music stops, take off the Roman helmet.*

"On the 52nd day of work, the wall and gates were finally finished! Because of Nehemiah and his leadership, the families of Jerusalem had completed the job they had set out to do."

*Put on the hard hat.*

**AUDIO: "WE ARE FAMILY" BY SISTER SLEDGE, FROM 0:33-0:50**

*As the music plays, pretend to give yourself a high-five. (First act out one half of the high-five, then the other half.) When the music stops, take off the hard hat.*

*Walk in front of the table as you wrap up the story.*

**WRAPPING UP THE STORY**

**STORYTELLER:** "The wall was completed in record time by a group of ordinary, everyday people. It was clear to everyone that God had helped Nehemiah and the people stay focused and finish strong. That's a good lesson for the rest of us, too!

"When there's a job to do, we need to take initiative. We need to remember that God is with us. We need to do this . . .

**SLIDE: BOTTOM LINE**

**"stay focused on what needs to be done.**

"Let's pray and ask God to help us."

**SLIDE: THEME BACKGROUND**





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25 MINUTES

## PRAY

**STORYTELLER:** “Dear God, thank You for helping Nehemiah stand strong, even when people were mean to him. You helped him focus so he could keep going when others tried to distract him. God, we know that we need to stay focused, too. We need to keep doing the things that You want us to do. Help us remember that You’re always with us and that **[Basic Truth] we can trust You no matter what.** We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus’ name. Amen.”

## CLOSER

*Host enters as Storyteller exits.*

**HOST:** “It must have been really tough for Nehemiah and the people to keep working on the city wall when Sanballat and Tobiah were rude to them. I mean, they could have felt overwhelmed by all the hard work they had to do to begin with. Then they had to listen to people say awful things to them and try to get them to stop!

“But even in that tough situation, Nehemiah knew exactly what to do. He chose to stay focused and trust God. He led the people to keep working and building. He saw what needed to be done, and he did it! He didn’t let anything distract him or stand in the way.

“With God’s help, we can show that kind of initiative, too. God is strong and faithful! He can give us the strength we need as we do what He’s asked us to do.

“Remember . . .

**SLIDE: BOTTOM LINE**

**“stay focused on what needs to be done.**

“That’s something we can see when we look at the way Jesus lived. There was a lot that could have distracted Jesus from doing what He had come to do: die on the cross for our sins. But Jesus stayed focused on what was most important. He had come to save the world and make it possible for us to have a relationship with God, forever!

“So when there’s something you need to do, don’t let things distract you. Don’t let people who are making unwise choices distract you. Ask God to help you **stay focused on what needs to be done.**

“You can head to Small Group now and talk about that some more. Have fun!”

*Dismiss kids to their small groups.*

**AUDIO: PLAY HIGH-ENERGY MUSIC AS THE KIDS EXIT.**

**SLIDE: THEME**

**OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME LOOP**