



## TODAY'S SUGGESTED SCHEDULE

### TODAY'S BIBLE STORY

#### Help!

Nehemiah Helps the Poor  
Nehemiah 5

### TODAY'S KEY QUESTION

Who do you see being  
treated unfairly?

### TODAY'S BOTTOM LINE

Look for ways to make things right.

### LARGE GROUP SUPPLIES

- Balloons (enough for every person in the room.)
- Air pumps
- Decorated cut-out of a planet on cardboard that sits on the floor
- Latex allergy sign if using latex balloons

### STORY SUPPLIES

- Cardboard box wall from week 1
- Balloon
- Air pump
- Numerous volunteers
- Hammers or tools
- Earmuffs or headphones
- Loaves of bread
- 2 walls/Dividers if available to hide Vignette until needed

### 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.

### SMALL GROUP

**15**  
MIN

#### SOCIAL: Providing time for fun interaction

Just for Fun  
Opening Activity

### LARGE GROUP

**35**  
MIN

#### ANNOUNCEMENTS:

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

#### WORSHIP:

- THROUGH IT ALL  
ZF: 7D7E @AF: ;@9 F: 3F'A GD'9A 6 '53@y'6A

### SMALL GROUP

**25**  
MIN



PRELUDE

SOCIAL

STORY

WORSHIP

GROUPS

HOME

25 MINUTES

10 MINUTES

## TODAY'S BIBLE STORY

**Help!**  
Nehemiah Helps the Poor  
Nehemiah 5

## TODAY'S KEY QUESTION

Who do you see being treated unfairly?

## TODAY'S BOTTOM LINE

Look for ways to make things right.

## MONTHLY MEMORY VERSE

Work at everything you do with all your heart. Work as if you were working for the Lord.  
Colossians 3:23a, NIV

## MONTHLY LIFE APP

Initiative—Seeing what needs to be done and doing it

## BASIC TRUTH

I should treat others the way I want to be treated.

## 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 STUDENTS ENTER.**

**SLIDE: THEME**

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

## WORSHIP

*Worship Leaders enter*

**WORSHIP LEADER:** "I love that we have this time to sing and praise God with each other. I love how these songs we sing are like prayers that we pray to God. This one is a way for us to tell Jesus that we'll trust Him. Let's worship Him as we sing this. Come on!"

**AUDIO: THROUGH IT ALL**

**AUDIO: THERE'S NOTHING THAT OUR GOD CAN'T DO**

*Host enters . . .*

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

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

## WELCOME

*Host has lots of energy as he or she welcomes everyone to [Name of Environment]. Host is relatable and inviting. Host can talk about something that happened culturally throughout the week, the latest video game or movie launches, back-to-school or sporting events, and so on. 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.*

*The host enters holding a deflated balloon.*



WEEK  
**TWO**  
SEPTEMBER 2021

LARGE GROUP  
**PRETEEN**

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

STORY

WORSHIP

GROUPS

HOME

25 MINUTES

10 MINUTES

## OPENER

**HOST:** "Kids! Leaders! Friends! Welcome once again to [Name of Environment]. I have in my hand the one thing that is a source of fun and fear for almost every human being on the planet. I'm, of course, talking about (*hold up the balloon*) the balloon."

"Some love the balloon. Some fear the balloon. Some are indifferent to the balloon, but we don't talk about those people. However, everyone—and by everyone, I mean me—has a temptation when handed a balloon that's not tied off. Allow me to demonstrate."

*Inflate the balloon with the pump and hold it shut so no air escapes. Hand the balloon off to someone in the Large Group, having him or her pinch the end shut.*

"You have the balloon now. Its life is in your hands. What do you desperately want to do with that balloon?"

*They should say, "Let it go."*

"(regardless of the kid's gender, say) Go ahead, Elsa. Let it go."

*Watch as the balloon launches and sputters around the room. Pick it up when it lands.*

"Yep. If you have a heartbeat, you'll feel the black-hole-like pull to let go of a balloon and watch it flop around the room. So today at [Name of Environment] I say, why resist? Let's give tons of kids in here balloons. And while we're at it, let's make a game out of it with some fun prizes! This game is called 'Stick the Landing!' Who's ready?"

*Have leaders help hand out balloons—but make sure to tell them NOT to blow them up. Using the pumps will ensure that no one's breath or spit is going to get flung around the room.*

*Balloons are color-coded, meaning each "team" has a color. Once balloons are handed out, continue.*

"On the floor is an exoplanet that scientists have recently discovered in the Virgo constellation. They've called it The Pink Planet, because the heat generated from the surface gives off a gentle, magenta hue. There's also a rumor that the planet is covered entirely with diamonds."

"Because of that, scientists and astronauts want to land on it as soon as possible—but they'll need to launch a few probes first. That's where you come in! You'll pump up your balloons, get in a giant circle around the planet, and launch your probes! The team, designated by the colors, with the most probes that land on the planet will be the winners! If you're ready, let's get pumping!"

*Have leaders help pump up the balloons. Gather the kids in a wide circle a good 8-10 feet away from the center "planet" on the ground, and on your countdown, launch the balloons.*

*Count up the balloons that land on the planet and declare a winner, handing our prizes to the winning team.*

"Great job! Let's hear it for our winners! Now, let's launch into some amazing worship to our amazing God!"



WEEK  
**TWO**  
SEPTEMBER 2021

LARGE GROUP  
**PRETEEN**

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

STORY

WORSHIP

GROUPS

HOME

25 MINUTES

## COMMUNICATOR SCRIPT (STORY)

SLIDE: THEME BACKGROUND

### INTRODUCTION

**COMMUNICATOR:** "Hello, everyone! Before we get started, I just have to do one thing."

*Take a balloon, pump it up, and let it go.*

"Sorry. I couldn't help myself. I can't remember the last time I did that. It's SO fun."

*Pause, and look around the room.*

"Quick question. Has anyone ever been so focused on a video game and your mom or dad asks you a question, and you say, 'What?!' and they have to repeat themselves? Turn and talk to your neighbor about a time you've been so totally focused on something that your ears stopped working."

*Allow time for kids to share. Take a couple examples to share with everyone else.*

"Great stories! OK, here's one more question. Have you ever been in a situation where you're so focused on yourself that you forget that there's people around you? You're at layer 11 in Minecraft looking for diamonds, and you don't even notice that your cat is on fire next to you? Turn to your neighbor and talk about that one!"

*Allow time for kids to share. Take a couple examples to share with everyone else.*

### TENSION

**COMMUNICATOR:** "Wow, a lot of you have felt that way. I know how that is, too. Sometimes I get so wrapped up in what I'm doing I forget there are actually other people on the planet with me."

"You're thinking about what YOU need, what YOU want, and unfortunately you're not even considering the needs of other people around you. Why are we like that sometimes? Why do we think only of ourselves, and why is it sometimes so hard to reach out and help someone else—or even notice that other people need help?"

"These are hard questions, I know. It's a good thing we have a (*hold up the Bible*) great resource to help us figure these things out. Thankfully, we started talking about a guy last week who can help us this week, too. Anyone remember his name? Yeah, that's right! Nehemiah!"

### TRUTH

*At several points in the script, the Communicator will be prompted to move to a pre-set "vignette," a freeze-frame posed scene that helps tell the story.*

**COMMUNICATOR:** "Let's just recap, in case you weren't here last week. Nehemiah found out that the wall around his home city of Jerusalem was in ruin. The city was in danger of more enemies. He took initiative to make it right. Nehemiah traveled all the way from Persia to Jerusalem. He surveyed the damage of the wall surrounding Jerusalem. He even gave a fantastic speech to the officials of the city and inspired them and the people to help with this huge project. And it was a HUGE project."



WEEK  
**TWO**  
SEPTEMBER 2021

LARGE GROUP  
**PRETEEN**

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

STORY

WORSHIP

GROUPS

HOME

25 MINUTES

*Light comes up on the fallen cardboard box wall from Week One, where several people are frozen in place with hammers, some picking up boxes; it looks as though they are beginning to put the wall back together. Move over to this first vignette.*

“Each family or group of people took a different part of the wall to work on, splitting up the huge job into more manageable tasks. They were really doing a fantastic job! However, not everyone thought this was a brilliant idea—or that they should be wasting their time doing it.”

*Lights dim on the wall, and come up on another part of the room, where two people are frozen, pointing and laughing at those working on the wall. Move to this second vignette.*

“Sanballat and Tobiah. Ugh, these two guys were the worst. They didn’t want to see the wall rebuilt—they were enemies of God’s people from surrounding lands. So they taunted the Jewish people for even trying.”

*Move very close to one of the frozen people’s face, and point close to it, uncomfortably so.*

“Look at him. Look at that face. He looks like someone who would make fun of an old person because she was taking too long to cross the street. ‘Look at that pathetic wall!’ he shouted at the workers. ‘If a fox climbs on that pathetic thing, it’ll fall right down!’”

*Lights dim on Sanballat and Tobiah. Lights come up on the wall again, and the “workers” are in their same exact positions but now are all wearing earmuffs or headphones.*

“The workers didn’t pay them any attention. They were working so hard and going so well that it seemed like nothing could stop their project from being done in record time!”

*Lights dim on the wall.*

“But, as these stories often go, when it seems like things are going one way, something happens that threatens to derail the whole thing. And it wasn’t Sanballat, or Tobiah, or those who wanted the wall stopped. This problem came from within the city walls.”

*Lights up on a family, parents and kids. Empty pockets, and looking very sad.*

“A group of Jewish people sought out Nehemiah. They found him working on the wall.”

*Open the Bible to Nehemiah 5:1-4 (NirV) and read.*

“Some men and their wives cried out against their Jewish brothers and sisters. Some of them were saying, “There are now many of us. We have many sons and daughters. We have to get some grain so we can eat and stay alive.” Others were saying, “We’re being forced to sell our fields, vineyards and homes. We have to do it to buy grain. There isn’t enough food for everyone.” Still others were saying, “We’ve had to borrow money. We needed it to pay the king’s tax on our fields and vineyards.””



WEEK  
**TWO**  
SEPTEMBER 2021

LARGE GROUP  
**PRETEEN**

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

STORY

WORSHIP

GROUPS

HOME

25 MINUTES

"They were telling Nehemiah that there wasn't enough food to go around. The taxes were high, forcing people to borrow money, but when they borrowed money, the people they borrowed money from charged them really high interest. Interest is extra money the people had to pay back."

"Interest is like if you borrowed \$10 from me, I would make you promise to pay it back in a week, but with 'interest' you now owe me \$15."

*Look at the family.*

"These people were suffering right in front of Nehemiah's eyes."

*Look at the wall.*

"But he had a job to do. He was busy. He had a wall to rebuild; it's why he came. He didn't come here to figure out taxes and food and farms. It wasn't his problem."

"Right?"

*Look at the family.*

"Wrong. When he heard about this, he asked, 'Who is making you do this? Who is charging you this high interest and forcing you to sell everything?' The answer shocked him. 'Other Jews,' they said. 'Our own relatives. We even had to send our children to work for them as slaves, to work off the debt.'"

*Lights dim on the family.*

"Nehemiah was outraged. He knew he had been sent to rebuild the wall—but this was something he had to take care of. But instead of flying off the handle and storming off to yell at the lenders who were overcharging their own family—"

*Lights up on the wall, only this time, it's one man. Kneeling and thinking.*

"—he waited. He thought it over for a time. His own people, the Jewish people were mistreating those who had less. It was just flat wrong. He felt so strongly about this that he halted all work on the wall until this was figured out. He gathered all of the Jewish nobles and leaders and officials together for a meeting."

*Lights dim on the wall.*

"Once Nehemiah had everyone all together, he let them have it."

*Open the Bible to Nehemiah 5:8-9; 11-12 (NirV) and read.*

"I said, 'Our Jewish brothers and sisters were sold to other nations. We've done everything we could to buy them back and bring them home. But look at what you are doing! You are actually selling your own people! Now we'll have to buy them back too!' The people kept quiet. They couldn't think of anything to say. So, I continued, 'What



WEEK  
**TWO**  
SEPTEMBER 2021

LARGE GROUP  
**PRETEEN**

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

STORY

WORSHIP

GROUPS

HOME

25 MINUTES

*you are doing isn't right. Shouldn't you show respect for our God? . . . Give the people's fields back to them. Give them back their vineyards, olive groves and houses. Do it right away . . . Also give them back the one percent on the money, grain, fresh wine and olive oil you have charged them."*

"Nehemiah called them all out—and they had nothing to say for themselves. They could've argued back, but they didn't. They could've blamed someone else, but they didn't. Instead, God moved on their hearts because of what Nehemiah said."

*Open the Bible to Nehemiah 5:12 (NirV) and read.*

*"We'll give it back," they said. "And we won't require anything more from them. We'll do exactly as you say."*

"Nehemiah sent for the priests so that these leaders and officials could make their promise not just in front of Nehemiah but before God, too. And they did what they said they would do. They gave everything back."

*Lights up on the family, only this time they are smiling and holding loaves of bread.*

"Everything was restored. People got back what they had lost. And because of that—"

*Lights dim on the family, and lights come up on the wall. The workers are back to work, frozen in positions with hammers again.*

"Work started back up again on the wall. And for the rest of the time working on the wall, Nehemiah looked out for the needs of the people, not just the needs of himself."

## APPLICATION

**COMMUNICATOR:** "Nehemiah had a huge job in front of him that needed all of his focus and attention. But even though he was faced with building the wall, he chose to address another problem that was right before his eyes. Nehemiah looked and saw that some of his people were being treated unfairly because they were poor. And he did something about it. He stood up for them and worked to make things more fair."

"We should stand up for people who are being treated unfairly. Period. End of sentence. Kids, if you don't hear anything else I say today, hear that. Treating others differently because of the way they look, or where they're from, or how much money they have, or what they believe, is wrong."

"Think about it—it's the way Jesus saw people, isn't it? He hung out with the tax collectors, the lepers, the people society shunned because they were different or had bad reputations. He showed people how valuable they were by loving them *no matter what*. And He inspired them to love others."

"We can be just like Nehemiah (and act a little more like Jesus) if we take our eyes off of our own needs to actually see someone else's."

"After all, isn't that how we want to be treated?"

## LANDING

**COMMUNICATOR:** "As you make your way to your Small Groups, think about this:"



WEEK  
**TWO**  
SEPTEMBER 2021

LARGE GROUP  
**PRETEEN**

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

STORY

WORSHIP

GROUPS

HOME

25 MINUTES

**SLIDE: KEY QUESTION**

**“Who do you see being treated unfairly?** What people need your help? And after you see them, *what are you going to do about it?* If you’re not sure how to answer that question, don’t worry. You’ll have a chance to chat more about it with your Small Group. As you head out, let’s pray and ask God for help seeing needs and having the courage to do something about them. Let’s pray.”

*Communicator leads group in a prayer related to what they just heard. After prayer, Communicator dismisses kids to Small Group.*

**AUDIO: PLAY HIGH-ENERGY MUSIC AS STUDENTS EXIT.**

**SLIDE: THEME**

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