



TODAY'S SUGGESTED SCHEDULE

TODAY'S BIBLE STORY

I Just Want to Celebrate

The Wall Is Rebuilt
Nehemiah 3-4, 6:15-16, 8:1-17

TODAY'S KEY QUESTION

What is God doing in your life that you can celebrate?

STORY SUPPLIES

- Completed cardboard box wall from previous weeks
- A pre-loaded song list of dance music

LARGE GROUP SUPPLIES

- A large bolt of felt
- Scissors
- Velcro balls
- Masking tape
- Fabric pens
- Cut the felt bolt to be about the size of an adult poncho. It can be either round or rectangular. Cut a hole (to fit a head through) in the center of the felt poncho. On one side, use the masking tape and fabric pens to create a bullseye with concentric circles, each with their own points. Leave enough room for the Velcro Balls to hit the target—they won't stick if it is all masking tape. Test the game by wearing the poncho and seeing if the Velcro Balls stick.

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:

- THERE'S NOTHING THAT OUR GOD CAN'T DO
Z'WAY MAKER

SMALL GROUP

25
MIN



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HOME

25 MINUTES

10 MINUTES

TODAY'S BIBLE STORY

I Just Want to Celebrate

The Wall Is Rebuilt
Nehemiah 3-4, 6:15-16, 8:1-17

TODAY'S KEY QUESTION

What is God doing in your life that you can celebrate?

TODAY'S BOTTOM LINE

Look for ways to celebrate what God has 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, NIV

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 STUDENTS ENTER.

SLIDE: THEME

OPTIONAL VIDEO (MEDIA PACKAGE): THEME LOOP

WORSHIP

Worship Leaders enter

WORSHIP LEADER: "Today is about celebration. It's time for us to sing and give all we've got to celebrate the amazing love of Jesus. There is nobody like Him, and there's no love like the love He's given us.

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

AUDIO: WAY MAKER

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 wearing a felt poncho.

OPENER

HOST: "Hi, everyone! Welcome back to [Name of Environment], and I bet you're noticing something different about me."



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Turn side to side, showing off the poncho.

“Yep. Got a haircut. (Pause.) Oh! You were thinking it was the thing I’m wearing! Well, yeah, that too. I was told it’s all the rage, and all of the kids are wearing it these days. It’s fuzzy, comfortable, and best of all—”

Turn around to show the back.

“There’s a game board on the back! You can totally play with your friends and stay warm at the same time. It’s called a Game Coat! Here, let’s have someone try it on.”

Invite a volunteer up to try on the Game Coat.

“Nice, right? Comfy, cozy, fuzzy—it’s like wearing a big fat sock! And here, watch this.”

Take the Game Coat back and put it on.

“If I spin this around and hold out my arms . . .”

Spin the poncho around so the game board on the back is now on the front. Hand a Velcro ball to the volunteer and stand back from them a good ten feet.

“Now. Chuck it.”

Have the volunteer whip the Velcro ball at the Game Poncho, and it should stick. Move if needed to “catch” it.

“Bullseye! Fun, right? And we’ve made a super fun game that teams can try! We call this game Moon Shot, and we’ll need Small Groups to compete against one another. Who’s ready?”

Choose as many Small Groups as supplies will allow.

“In your hands you have some meteors. Your job is to launch your meteors to crash land on the moon. But, we need a moon. Small Group Leaders, throw on those Game Coats, game boards on the back this time. Moon Shot, remember?”

“We’ll let teams go one at a time, rack up as many points as you can, we’ll tally them up at the end, high score is the winner! Here’s the only rule—the balls must stick. They can’t just hit and fall off; we’ll only count the ones that stick to the Game Coat. Let’s play!”

Play the game, count up the points, and declare a winner.

“Way to go, teams!”



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COMMUNICATOR SCRIPT (STORY)

SLIDE: THEME BACKGROUND

INTRODUCTION

COMMUNICATOR: "Hello, everyone! Glad to be back here with you, and we are closing out the month of September with Nehemiah finishing the wall! If I were him, I'd be pretty happy with myself."

"Is there anything you've done that makes you 'happy with yourself'? Maybe some accomplishment of yours? Okay, I see some hands out there."

"Sure, maybe we all have stories to share about times we got the right answer, scored the big goal, or sang our hearts out for a standing ovation."

"But think about something for a moment. Were those things all you or were there other people who helped you with it? There's a good chance you had someone who helped you understand how to arrive at the answer, a teammate who passed you the ball, or a music teacher who taught you how to sing. Most of our personal accomplishments can be tied to the help of others, so why do we take most or all of the credit?"

TENSION

COMMUNICATOR: "I'll cut right to the chase."

"Sometimes we're humble-braggers, aren't we? Have you heard that term before? It's pretending to be super humble about something, but the humility is really just hidden in a total brag. Maybe you've heard something like that from influencers on YouTube, people who think they're super important."

"They'll use words that both make them seem humble while bragging about what they have or something they get to do. Like, 'I'm so blessed and humbled to be able to get my first ever Lamborghini because of YOUR support.' Riiiiight . . ."

"Maybe you've heard of the phrase 'Give credit where credit is due.' In most of the humblebrag situations, the goal is to give credit to yourself while making it sound like the credit goes to someone else. But think about this. Do we ever humblebrag on God?"

"'I'm so blessed to be able to be the captain of this team.' or 'I'm so thankful I'm so smart and don't have to study to get really great grades.' Sure, they might sound like giving God credit, but the goal is really to make yourself look good."

"Why do you think we do that? What can we do about it? How can remember to give God the credit when something great happens to us? Great questions!"

"Remember where we turn first, when we have big questions? That's right, the Bible. We get to read about all sorts of people who learned from their encounters with God, who inspired them to write them down so we could learn from them all of these years later."

"All month, we've focused on one man and his story, Nehemiah. Let's pick up his story where we left off last week!"



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TRUTH

Throughout the Communicator script are prompts to start a dance party. Choose fun dance music your kids enjoy.

COMMUNICATOR: “But first, a quick recap! Nehemiah found out that the wall around the city of his people—Jerusalem—was broken and crumbling! With the walls destroyed, the city was in danger of enemy attacks. He took initiative to head back to Jerusalem make it right. Nehemiah rallied the people to rebuild the walls and get the job done.”

“Now, to give you a sense of just how massive this job was, let me tell you about the walls surrounding Jerusalem. The length of the entire wall was 4,018 meters. Guys, that’s two and a half miles long. The average height of the walls—meaning some were actually taller than this—is 12 meters. That’s 40 feet tall. Not only that but these walls were eight feet thick!”

“Let’s say you have a good slab of rock, about two feet long and four or five inches thick. You would need 3,444,000 rocks that size to build this wall.”

“That’s a huge accomplishment! And guess how long it took them? *(Pause to take guesses.)* Some of you were close. Some of you, not so much. But they completed the wall in just 52 days! So imagine Nehemiah standing in front of some of the main gates as they swung open, brand new, for the first time. He might just have a smile on his face, right? Less than two months before he was crawling around in the middle of the night, surveying all of the damage, stepping over piles of rubble, taking note of burned down gates. The work had seemed nearly impossible.”

“Silly kids. Don’t you know nothing is impossible with God? I think that’s something to celebrate! Dance Party!”

AUDIO: DANCE SONG

Play a song and have the kids dance around for a minute or so.

“Woo! Yeah! Nice moves! Now, kids, Nehemiah knew the reason for all of this success. It wasn’t him and him alone. It wasn’t even because of all of the hard work everyone put in . . . although that helped. It was God—and the nations surrounding Jerusalem didn’t like it one bit.”

Open the Bible to Nehemiah 6:16 and read.

“*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.*”

“The Jewish people were no longer afraid. They were no longer completely open to attack from their enemies. Their city, their homeland, was now protected in a way that it had not been for many, many years. And God helped them do it! What a thing to celebrate! Dance Party!”

AUDIO: DANCE SONG

Play a song and have the kids dance around for a minute or so.



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"Now that the walls had been rebuilt, a short time later Nehemiah called all the people together. He wanted to honor God in a very special way. Men, women, children, families, and friends all gathered together near the Water Gate at sunrise, and Nehemiah had invited a very special speaker to come to read God's Word to them. It was a man named Ezra."

"Ezra was a teacher of God's Law, and he stood on a high, wooden stage. He beamed at the people with a wide, joyful smile, and as he opened the book, all of the people stood."

Have all of the kids stand in the room.

"Ezra praised the Lord! He praised the Lord at the top of his voice, and as he did, the people responded with, 'Amen! Amen!' It was a time to get their praise on!"

AUDIO: UP-TEMPO WORSHIP SONG

Play the song for a minute or so, through the Spanish verse, then fade it out.

"Ezra continued, and as he did, all of the people bowed their heads down low as they praised."

Have all of the kids bow low.

"He read God's Word from sunrise all the way through lunchtime, and the Levites taught the people what God's laws meant. When they explained what Ezra was reading, the people became a bit troubled."

Have all of the kids get back in their seats.

"The people stated feeling guilty. They felt down because they realized that they hadn't been paying much attention to God's laws. They weren't following God or His laws. They began to weep, feeling sad and embarrassed. But listen to what Nehemiah and Ezra told them in Nehemiah 8:9-11."

Open the Bible to Nehemiah 8:9-11 (NIRV) and read.

"Nehemiah was the governor. Ezra was a priest and the teacher of the Law. They spoke up. So did the Levites who were teaching the people. All these men said to the people, 'This day is set apart to honor the Lord your God. So, don't weep. Don't be sad.' All the people had been weeping as they listened to the words of the Law.

Nehemiah said, '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.'

The Levites calmed all the people down. They said, 'Be quiet. This is a holy day. So don't be sad.'"

"Basically, they were all saying that this was a day for God, for celebration—not a time to be sad! The people listened. They went to get something to eat, and as they did, they began to talk about the amazing things their God had done. They shared their food with others. They swapped stories of great joy. And soon, their sadness turned around. They became much more joyful! So much so that they decided to have . . . a dance party!"



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AUDIO: DANCE SONG

Play a song and have the kids dance around for a minute or so.

"During this time, the people also learned that it was a special time of the year—a time that they were to celebrate the Feast of Booths. The feast is also called Sukkot. The Feast of Booths commemorates the miraculous protection God provided for the children of Israel when they left Egypt. God's people were to celebrate by living and eating in a branch-covered booth, like a tent of sorts. As Ezra read God's words to the people, he explained:"

Open the Bible to Nehemiah 8:15-17a (NIRV) and read.

"[The Jewish people] were also supposed to spread the message all through their towns and in Jerusalem. They were supposed to announce, "Go out into the central hill country. Bring back some branches from olive and wild olive trees. Also bring some from myrtle, palm and shade trees. Use the branches to make booths."

So, the people went out and brought back some branches. They built themselves booths on their own roofs . . . They lived in them during the Feast of Booths."

Have the worship team come back on the stage.

"The Jewish people hadn't felt this much joy and celebration and feasting for a long, long time. In fact, it was literally hundreds of years since they felt that much joy. They reconnected with God in a big way, and wouldn't you know—they capped off the whole celebration . . . with a dance party!"

Have the worship team play your kids' church's favorite, most energetic praise song.

APPLICATION

COMMUNICATOR: "Thanks, Praise Team! You're awesome!"

"The people were happy, filled with joy. They got their lives back where they needed to be, and that was in direct connection with God. They had strayed from that path, but through building the wall, hearing God's Word, and giving God praise, they found joy once again."

"There's a lesson here, guys, and it's a straightforward one. Take time to remind yourself what God has done for you . . . not just on days like Christmas/Easter but every day. Be grateful. Be thoughtful. Be kind. God is always there to help us. God is always working through us to make things right in the world around us."

"God answers our prayers, helps us figure out what's right and what's wrong, and gives us courage when we have to own up and apologize. God is with us every step of the way."

"Look back at the Story of the Bible and see what God has done in the past. The biggest thing? God loves you so much that He sent Jesus for you! If you sat a moment and thought about it, you can come up with all kinds of times when God was there. God has good plans for us, kids. We can trust God no matter what."

LANDING

COMMUNICATOR: "Think about this question as you head to your Small Groups:



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SLIDE: KEY QUESTION

“What is God doing in your life that you can celebrate?” What things can you point to and say, “That’s totally God!?” If you’re having trouble thinking of something, don’t worry. You’ll have a chance to talk more about it with your Small Group. I have a feeling they’ll be able to help you see the moments in your life where God has played a part. Before we explore that, let’s pray and thank God for being the best part of our lives.”

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