

## LESSON 7: GOD IS FAITHFUL TO NEHEMIAH

Leader Guide for Grades 5 & 6

Classroom: Deeply Rooted

 Nehemiah 1–2

01/19/2020

### Teachers Dig In

#### Dig In to the Bible

- Read: Nehemiah 1–2
- In This Passage: Nehemiah is in exile in another country when he hears that the wall around Jerusalem is in ruins. He is devastated and cries out to God for help. God is faithful to provide Nehemiah with all the supplies, protection, and courage he needs to rebuild the wall. Nehemiah is faithful to do what God has called him to do.
- Bible Point: God is faithful...
- Application: ...so we're faithful.
- Summary Verse: "For I am about to do something new. See, I have already begun! Do you not see it?" (Isaiah 43:19).

#### Dig Deeper

- You'll Be Teaching: *God is faithful*. A lot of kids are still learning what it means to be faithful to God. (Aren't we all?) They may compartmentalize God to the part of their lives when they're at church. Help kids see that God is faithful to them all through their week, in all they do, and he wants them to be faithful to him in return.
- Think About: Look back over the past year. How have you seen God's faithfulness to you? Make a list.

#### Dig In to Prayer

- Pray that kids' hearts would be faithfully devoted to God as a response to seeing his faithfulness to them.

#### Quick Tip

- Set an example of faithfulness in your classroom. Faithfulness means sticking with people and standing up for them, so make sure kids know to be faithful to one another. This may include avoiding put-downs, keeping confidential things confidential, and looking out for someone who seems lonely or sad.

## This Lesson at a Glance



### OPENING

Kids share about a topic related to the lesson.

#### Supplies

- Bible



### CORE BIBLE DISCOVERY

Kids gather letters and supplies that reveal God's faithfulness.

#### Supplies

- Bible
- aluminum foil
- suitcase or box
- craft sticks (several per child)
- several sheets of paper
- green army men (at least 1 per child)
- "Promises" handout (download [here](#))

#### Easy Prep

- Scatter craft sticks and green army men around the perimeter of the room.
- Fold several sheets of paper in thirds like letters. Scatter these around the perimeter of the room.
- Cut apart the hearts on the "Promises" handout, and scatter them around the perimeter of the room.



### LIFE APPLICATION WRAP-UP

Kids imitate Nehemiah's prayer.



### OBJECT LESSON

Kids discover how a constant affects experiments.

#### Supplies

- classroom chairs
- rubber bands (8 for every 2 kids)
- variety of objects to launch (at least 1 object for every 2 kids)
- bin

#### Easy Prep

- Gather objects to launch, and put them in a bin for kids to choose from. Add things like cotton balls, pompoms, Nerf balls, ping-pong balls, and tennis balls.



### HIGH-ENERGY GAME

Kids play a game of Sticker Tag.

#### Supplies

- generic sticky notes (5 per child) (the cheaper the better; you don't want these to adhere very well)
- stickers (5 per child) (any shape or size, as long as they're much stickier than the sticky notes)
- upbeat music (optional)
- music player (optional)



### LOW-ENERGY GAME

Kids attempt three-legged races without and with ribbons to tie their legs together.

#### Supplies

- 2-inch thick ribbon (12 inches for every 2 kids)
- upbeat music (optional)
- music player (optional)

#### Easy Prep

- Cut a 12-inch length of ribbon for every 2 kids.



## CRAFT

**Kids make Velcro dartboards.**

### Supplies

- sturdy paper plates (1 per child)
- markers
- adhesive Velcro
- scissors
- ping-pong balls (1 per child)

### Easy Prep

- Make a sample craft to show kids.

*\*Marked supplies are also used in Core Bible Discovery*

Let's keep kids safe! You can help by using supplies as instructed for only ages 3+, purchasing child-safe items, and being aware of allergy concerns.



### Supplies

- Bible

### Welcome

- Thank kids for coming.
- Just for fun, have kids pat the people next to them on the back.
- Make announcements.
- Introduce new kids.
- Celebrate birthdays by having kids say “appy-hay irthday-bay” (“happy birthday” in pig Latin).
- Collect the offering.

### Introduce the Lesson

Say: **Today we’re going to learn that God is faithful, so we’re faithful. In today’s Bible story, God was faithful to Nehemiah by giving him all the supplies he needed.**

### Share

- Tell kids what supplies *you’d* gather to make an ice cream sundae.
- Have kids form pairs. Ask kids to share what supplies *they’d* gather to make an ice cream sundae.
- After partners have discussed, ask two or three kids to share with the whole group what they talked about with their partners.

### Summarize

Open a Bible to Nehemiah 1, and say: **Gathering supplies for ice cream sundaes sounds pretty nice! In the Bible, Nehemiah had to gather supplies to fix something that was broken. He was really sad that it was broken, but God was faithful to him. Let’s look in the Bible to find out more. The Bible is amazing! It’s full of incredible stories—and they’re all true! God gave us the Bible so he can speak to us anytime. He’s faithful, so he’s always here for us. Let’s hear from him as we explore the Bible. And let’s talk to him right now.**

Pray, praising God for being faithful.



## Supplies

- Bible
- aluminum foil
- suitcase or box
- craft sticks (several per child)
- several sheets of paper
- green army men (at least 1 per child)
- “Promises” handout (download [here](#))

## Easy Prep

- Scatter craft sticks and green army men around the perimeter of the room.
- Fold several sheets of paper in thirds like letters. Scatter these around the perimeter of the room.
- Cut apart the hearts on the “Promises” handout, and scatter them around the perimeter of the room.

## Consider Bad News

Say: **Today we’re going to learn that God is faithful. Sometimes that’s easy to believe. When everything is going well, we can trust God—no problem.**

**But sometimes when we’re going through difficult times, it’s harder to believe that God is faithful.**

**Think about a hard time you’re going through or went through recently. Maybe your parents are getting divorced or someone you love is sick. Maybe you’re struggling in school or you feel like you have no friends. Maybe a bully is picking on you or you have to move far away. Or maybe it’s something else. Get that problem in your head. Allow time for kids to think.**

Ask: • **When you first found out about your problem, how did you react?**

Say: **In our Bible story, a man named Nehemiah heard some sad news. Before we hear the news, let me tell you a little bit about what was going on at that time.**

**God’s people, the Israelites, used to live in the country of Judah. But they kept disobeying God, and eventually God let other people take over the country. Those enemies took the Israelites to other countries as captives.**

**Many, many years later, God let some of his people return to Jerusalem, the main city in Judah. When the Israelites first lived there, a big wall surrounded Jerusalem.**

**Our story is about Nehemiah. Nehemiah was one of the Israelites who lived in another country. He worked as a cupbearer to the king, tasting his drinks to make sure they weren’t poisoned. That meant the king trusted him with his life! Nehemiah felt sad that his people had lost their country. That’s where we pick up today.**

Read Nehemiah 1:2-3.

Ask: • **Tell about a time something you loved was destroyed. Share your own example first.**

Say: **Earlier we talked about how we reacted when we heard about our problems. Let’s see what Nehemiah did first.**

Read Nehemiah 1:4.

Ask: • **How is Nehemiah’s reaction like or unlike yours?**

Say: **Nehemiah prayed because he remembered that God is faithful. *Faithful* means you stick with someone and keep your promises. As I read Nehemiah’s prayer, listen for ways Nehemiah talked about God keeping promises and sticking with his people.**

Read Nehemiah 1:8-9.

Ask: • **What things did you notice in these verses that show God is faithful?**

Say: **Let’s read more of Nehemiah’s prayer.**

Read Nehemiah 1:10-11.

Ask: • **Do you think Nehemiah trusted God to hear his prayer? Why or why not?**

Say: **When Nehemiah heard the bad news about the wall, he turned to God in prayer. He trusted that God is faithful, and he didn't doubt God.**

### **Strengthen Foil**

Give each child a piece of aluminum foil, about a foot long.

Say: **Let's use this foil to think about the way we react to bad news. Imagine that this foil is you. When something bad happens and you *don't* turn to God, the bad thing can easily make your heart feel broken, or tear you apart.**

Have each child rip a corner off the foil.

Say: **But when we turn to God in prayer and trust that God is faithful, he helps us be strong and have a strong faith!**

Have each child crumple the aluminum foil into a ball and hold it in hands folded as if praying. Then have kids try to tear the balls without uncrumpling them. They'll notice it's difficult or even impossible!

Ask: • **How does the foil help you think differently about the bad time you thought of earlier?**

Say: **God is faithful, so we're faithful. We don't let bad times tear apart our faith in God. Instead, we let bad times help our faith grow stronger!**

### **Gather Supplies**

Get out the suitcase or box.

Say: **Nehemiah trusted that God is faithful, and God was so faithful to Nehemiah! Nehemiah got a chance to tell the king in his foreign country how sad he was about the walls. Listen to what the king said.**

Read Nehemiah 2:4-6.

Say: **The king said yes! Next, Nehemiah asked the king for specific things to help.**

Read Nehemiah 2:7.

Say: **Nehemiah needed letters so he could stay safe. You'll find some folded letters around the room. Gather them and pack them in this suitcase.** Allow time.

Say: **Let's see what else Nehemiah needed.**

Read Nehemiah 2:8.

Say: **Nehemiah needed wood! Let's gather wood.** Allow time for kids to gather the craft sticks and pack them in the suitcase.

Say: **Not only that, but the king sent an army with Nehemiah!**

Read Nehemiah 2:9.

Say: **Let's gather up our army!** Have kids gather the army men and put them in the suitcase.

Say: **God was faithful to Nehemiah, and God is faithful to us, too. There's one more supply we need to help us remember that God is faithful.**

Have kids gather the hearts from the "Promises" handout. Whoever collects a verse can read it aloud or pass it to you if he or she is uncomfortable reading.

Ask: • **Which verse means the most to you in light of the problem you thought about before?**

Say: **The verses we read are promises from God. And God is faithful, so we know he'll do what he promised.**

### **Investigate Rubble**

Close up the suitcase or box and carry it across the room, and have kids follow you with their aluminum foil balls. Have kids make a pile of their aluminum foil balls, and put the suitcase next to it.

Say: **With all his supplies, Nehemiah went to check out the wall and see how bad the damage was. Let's investigate our rubble.** Have kids pick up the aluminum foil balls and inspect them, sharing any observations.

Say: **Here's what Nehemiah found.**

Read Nehemiah 2:13-15.

Say: **God is faithful, so we're faithful. Nehemiah faithfully obeyed God's calling to go rebuild the wall. And God faithfully helped Nehemiah. In fact, Nehemiah and a team of people rebuilt the wall in just 52 days! That's less than two months!**

Think about this for a minute. God showed his faithfulness by making a way for Nehemiah to fix the wall. Nehemiah obeyed faithfully. Think about this question:

Ask: • **What's a way God is calling *you* to be faithful to him?** Allow a bit of time for thinking, and then have kids share in pairs.

Say: **God is faithful, so we're faithful.** Nehemiah never could've rebuilt the wall without God's faithful help. But because God is faithful, Nehemiah overcame all the obstacles and rebuilt the wall.

**When you're faithful to do what God says, he'll be faithful to help you get it done. You never have to obey just by trying really hard on your own. God is faithful, and he'll be there to help you!**



## LIFE APPLICATION WRAP-UP

[5 min]

### Pray for Faithfulness

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#### Pray Like Nehemiah Prayed

- Nehemiah prayed, asking God for forgiveness (Nehemiah 1:6-7). Have kids pray silently, asking God for forgiveness.
- Nehemiah prayed, thanking God for his promises (Nehemiah 1:8-9). Have an open time for kids to pray aloud, thanking God for his promises.
- Nehemiah prayed for success in doing what God wanted him to do (Nehemiah 1:11). Have kids form trios and pray for each other to have success in obeying God and staying faithful to him.
- Nehemiah prayed for the right words to say (Nehemiah 2:4-5). Have kids pray silently that God would give them the right words all week long.

#### Wrap Up

Pray: **God, thank you that you are faithful. Help us be faithful to you! In Jesus' name, amen.**

Thank kids for coming, and encourage them to come back next week.



## OBJECT LESSON

### Constant Faithfulness

[10 min]

### Supplies

- classroom chairs
- rubber bands (8 for every 2 kids)
- variety of objects to launch (at least 1 object for every 2 kids)
- bin

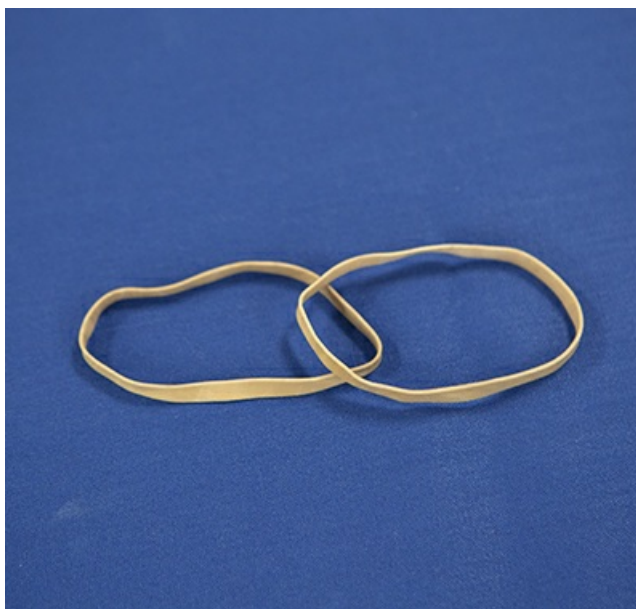
### Easy Prep

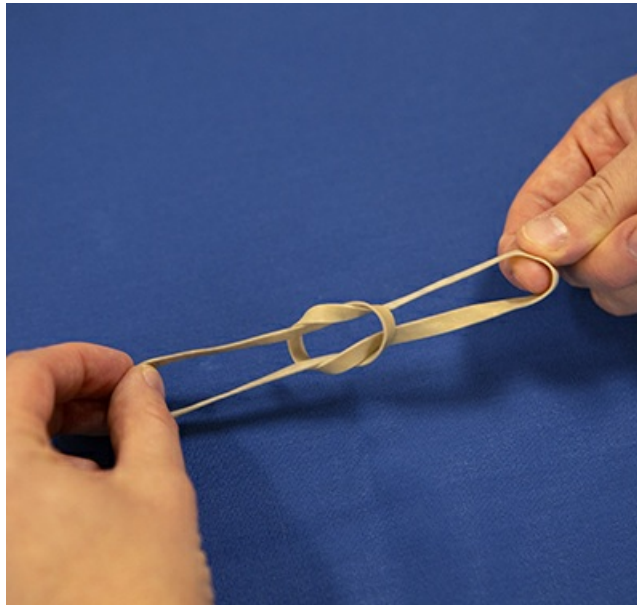
- Gather objects to launch, and put them in a bin for kids to choose from. Add things like cotton balls, pompoms, Nerf balls, ping-pong balls, and tennis balls.

### Make Launchers

Say: **Every science experiment has variables. Variables are things that you test and change. But every experiment also needs to have a constant that doesn't change. Let's see how a constant affects an experiment. To do so, we'll turn our chairs into launchers!**

- Form pairs, and give each pair eight rubber bands. Show kids how to make a chain of rubber bands by overlapping them and then pulling the bottom band through the top one and then through itself.





- Have each pair turn a chair upside down (as pictured below), and line up the chairs along one side of the room.
- Show kids how to wrap the ends of the rubber-band chain around the front two chair legs to form a launcher.



### Launch Objects

Say: **You have everything you need. Now it's time to figure out which object launches the best. You can try different objects, and you can make your rubber-band chain smaller or larger if you need to. But keep the chair right where it is. Ready? Go!**

- Have each pair choose an object, hold it in front of the rubber bands as they pull back, and then let go.
- Encourage kids to think through adjustments that can be made to the launcher and which objects might work even better.
- Celebrate great launches together. After several minutes, have pairs choose their best launching method, and have all the pairs launch together on the count of three to see which object goes the farthest.



### Talk About It

Ask: • **What did you change as you experimented with your launcher?** Kids might mention changing objects, changing the length of the rubber-band chains, or changing how they pulled the rubber-band chains.

• **What stayed the same in this experiment? In other words, what was the constant?**

Say: **Many things changed, but the chair stayed the same. Like the chair was the constant in this experiment, God is our constant in life. God is faithful. Even when things in life change, God is still faithful.**

Ask: • **When has something changed in your life? How did God help you with that change? Share a story from your own life to begin the conversation.**

Say: **God is faithful. We can count on his constant love and presence in our lives.**



## HIGH-ENERGY GAME

### Strongly Sticky

[10 min]

### Supplies

- generic sticky notes (5 per child) (the cheaper the better; you don't want these to adhere very well)
- stickers (5 per child) (any shape or size, as long as they're much stickier than the sticky notes)
- upbeat music (optional)
- music player (optional)

### Tip

- If you used the Music Video block, consider repeating the songs from today's lesson during the game. You can find the downloadable album [here](#).

### Play Sticker Tag

Say: **The Bible shows us in so many ways how God is faithful. In today's story, God was faithful to Nehemiah in answering his prayers and sticking with Nehemiah through the challenges he faced.**

**Let's play a game with a sticky challenge!**

- Give each person five sticky notes and five stickers to place on the underside of his or her forearms.
- At your cue, everyone will run around trying to stick the sticky notes and stickers onto other people's backs.
- If any sticky notes or stickers fall to the floor, pick them up so you can tally after the game is over.
- If you'd like, play upbeat music while kids play.

### Talk About It

Hold up the sticky notes and any stickers that fell off during the game. Most likely there will be more sticky notes.

Say: **We've probably all experienced faithfulness that's super sticky, like the stickers, and faithfulness that isn't so sticky, like the sticky notes.**

Ask: • **Who's a friend or family member who's always faithful to you—sticking with you through hard times and good times?**

• **Tell about a time you've felt like someone forgot you or left you behind.** Share your own example first.

Say: **We're all human, and that means sometimes our faithfulness is like the sticky notes—we don't always stick with people no matter what. God is faithful, more like the stickers—super sticky and strong. But God is even better than the stickers because God's faithfulness *never* fails. God sticks with us absolutely no matter what. When we stick with God, our faithfulness will become more and more like his.**



## LOW-ENERGY GAME

### Keep It Together

[10 min]

### Supplies

- 2-inch thick ribbon (12 inches for every 2 kids)
- upbeat music (optional)
- music player (optional)

### Easy Prep

- Cut a 12-inch length of ribbon for every 2 kids.

### Tip

- If you used the Music Video block, consider repeating the songs from today's lesson during the game. You can find the album [here](#).

### Run a Three-Legged Race

Say: **In today's Bible story, God showed he was faithful to Nehemiah by answering his prayers and staying with Nehemiah when his prayers led to new challenges. God stuck with Nehemiah through the ups and downs.**

**Let's play a game where you'll stick with a friend whether things are hard or easy.**

- Form pairs, inviting any teen or adult helpers to play as needed to make sure everyone can be in a pair. Give each pair a ribbon.
- Have everyone line up at one end of the room.
- Have partners try to do a three-legged race without the help of a tie to keep their legs together. Pairs must keep their inside legs connected as they move in the race.
- At your signal, pairs will walk quickly to race to the other end of the room, touch the wall, and then walk back to their starting place.
- If you spot pairs who lose their connection during the race, send them back to the start to try again.
- If you'd like, play upbeat music while kids race.
- For the second round, have partners tie the ribbon securely (but not too tight) around their inside legs near the level of their ankles. Now it will be easier to stick together in a three-legged race.

### Talk About It

Ask: • **What challenges did you have in moving together in the first race?**

• **Why was it easier to move together with your partner for the second race?**

Say: **You were faithful to your partner in the game when you stuck together. Sometimes it was hard, and sometimes it was easy. That's a lot like our relationships with friends and family in real life.**

Ask: • **Tell about someone you'd stick with no matter what, such as a best friend or family member.** Share an example of your own to start, such as a friend you've had for years or even a faithful pet.

Say: **Being faithful means sticking with someone in hard times and good times and whether it's hard or easy for us. God is faithful, so he sticks with us. Because God is faithful, we can be faithful to God.**



## CRAFT

### Sticky Dartboards

[20 min]

#### Supplies

- sturdy paper plates (1 per child)
- markers
- adhesive Velcro
- scissors
- ping-pong balls (1 per child)

#### Easy Prep

- Make a sample craft to show kids.



#### Make Velcro Dartboards

Show kids the sample craft you made. Give each child a sturdy paper plate and a ping-pong ball. Set out the markers, Velcro, and scissors to share. Have kids follow these directions to make their own sticky dartboards.

- Draw a bull's-eye with two rings around it on the plate so it looks like a dartboard.
- Color the bull's-eye and rings different colors.
- Draw lines through the center and outer rings to divide them into four sections each.
- Cut strips of the hook side of the Velcro, and put them in your rings. Make sure the strips are short enough to fit inside the rings of the target. It's okay if some small parts don't have Velcro.
- In gaps where there's no Velcro, write a point value for each section of the dartboard. The bull's-eye should be worth the most, the sections of the center ring should be worth a little less, and the sections of the outer ring should be worth the least.
- Make a "dart" by covering a ping-pong ball with the fuzzy side of the Velcro.

#### Play

- Find a partner to hold your dartboard.
- Stand a few feet away and toss the ball.
- Add up your points over three tosses.
- Swap roles so your partner can play with his or her dartboard for three tosses.

#### Talk About It

Ask: • Faithfulness means sticking with someone. How does your dart show faithfulness to your dartboard?

Say: God is faithful. He'll always stick with us. In the Bible, he stuck with Nehemiah to help him get all the supplies and protection he needed to build the wall. And Nehemiah was faithful to do what God wanted him to do. Our dartboard and dart are *both* sticky, so they stick with each other. We can stick to God because we know he'll stick to us.

Have kids take their dartboards home and play darts with their friends and families as a reminder that God is faithful and sticks with us.

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