

Beginner Level, Block 8, Week 1
Zerubbabel and Nehemiah—Being Strong Governors and Very Able Leaders

Point to Emphasize: We need someone over us to supervise and direct us.

Reading Reference: Ezra 1:1-5; 2:1-2; 3:10-13

Memory Verse: But all things must be done becomingly and in order. (1 Corinthians 14:40)

Story Sample

Our stories about Daniel have been so good! What have you liked most about Daniel? (Have the children answer according to past stories.) But there is one thing about Daniel that was not so good. It was where he lived. God's people were carried away to Babylon when Daniel was younger. But God's people belonged in the good land, not in Babylon. So, when Daniel was an old man, God arranged that His people return to the good land and especially to the city of Jerusalem. God used three leaders among the children of Israel to do this. Today, we are going to hear about two of them, Zerubbabel and Nehemiah. I doubt any of you have heard stories about these two. The first one-Zerubbabel has a super name, doesn't he! It is such a super name to say-Zerubbabel!

Well, Zerubbabel was the one whom God chose to be the strong leader of the people when they returned to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem, and Nehemiah was there later for the rebuilding of the city wall. Everything that was in Jerusalem before had been thoroughly destroyed, so both rebuilding projects took years to complete. There was lots of work to do and lots of people to organize and manage, so that the projects could be completed. These projects needed very good leaders, but it also needed many people who could listen to directions and follow the supervision of the good leaders that God had provided.

Here is an example:

When I was a child, a group of us decided to build a clubhouse in the desert close to our homes. We would go out to the place we had chosen and discuss what we needed to do and what we wanted it to look like, etc. But soon, we needed someone to direct the work. Otherwise, one would start here, and one would start there, and another would be over there. All of us would be working, but it would turn out to be a mess and not a clubhouse. So, we asked my dad if he would oversee the project. When we built our clubhouse, having a leader meant that we could not just go and do it our own individual ways. We had to check with my dad and go along with how he directed. He was a good leader because he cared about our clubhouse, he knew how to build things, and he cared about all of us who were building it. But a good leader can only be as good as those he directs and manages. If we had not taken his directions and suggestions, the clubhouse would not have turned out so well. *[Storyteller, give your own example of being under someone's leadership in doing a project or activity. Bring out the point that sometimes we don't like doing what others direct us to do.]*

Well, it was the same situation for the children of Israel. They had gone back to the good land to rebuild, but if they just showed up and worked in the way they wanted to, the work would be a mess. There needed to be good leaders, ones able to supervise and direct the work, BUT there needed to be those that willingly followed their directions and supervision. Sometimes it is not so easy to be under someone else's direction, but we need to learn that, as we grow, we will be in many situations under someone's supervision. Have you ever wondered why we have lunch or

recess monitors at school? Why do we have guards at the cross-walk? *[Bring in a discussion showing that without supervision we will not always conduct ourselves as we should.]*

Now and then we may be the leader or the captain who chooses the team, or the one who leads the salute to the flag, or the one who needs to direct a group for a school project, BUT most often we will be those who are under someone else's leadership and direction. It is really good to know that being one who cooperates with the leader is so important. Even though both Zerubbabel and Nehemiah were such outstanding leaders, NOTHING could have been accomplished without the hundreds of Israelites who were willing to be under their leadership and direction!

Beginner Level, Block 8, Week 2
Ezra—Excellent Character with a Good Reputation

Point to Emphasize: We can be children with excellent characters and good reputations.

Reading Reference: Ezra 7—8

Memory Verse: ...Take forethought for things honorable in the sight of all men. (Romans 12:17b)

Story Sample

Last week, we heard about two leaders among God’s people—Zerubbabel and Nehemiah. For most of us, it was the first time we had heard any stories about these two. Zerubbabel was well known among the people and we might have expected him to become a leader. Our third leader is different. He was known among the people for knowing the Word of God. His name was Ezra and he was a Jewish priest and a scribe. As a scribe he studied God’s Word, so we can say that he was like a scholar. A scholar is someone who studies a lot. There are many kinds of jobs, but many of you have never heard that some people study as a job. Ezra studied the law of God. He knew the Word of God. He studied it every day.

You might think, “How can someone who studies all day become a leader?” Well, here is part of Ezra’s story. Many Jews had returned to Jerusalem years before and they had rebuilt the temple, the house of God. But Ezra realized that even though the house of God was now rebuilt, no one there knew how to worship God. The Jews who returned to Jerusalem had grown up in Babylon and had not studied God’s Word, so they did not know how God was to be worshipped. Ezra realized that he needed to go with others and help bring in the proper worship to God. To be able to do this he had to go and appear before the ruling king to present his petition. Ezra wanted to go before the king and request that he and more Jews be allowed to return to the good land.

In those days not just anyone could go and see the king. It is not like dropping by and visiting a classmate or a friend who lives down the street. The king ruled over a large, vast kingdom. He did not waste time seeing everyone who wanted something from him. But Ezra was respected among the people, and he was known for his excellent character. Ezra had a very good reputation.

Now, let’s consider this. If someone in your class always talks when the teacher is explaining something, the word will spread among the teachers that this child is a problem. Is that a good or a bad reputation? But if there is a classmate who always is kind and friendly to the new students in the class, will they get a good or a bad reputation?

Once when I was your age, my school had a parade and awards were given. Do you know what kind of award I got? I was given the honor of being “Miss Friendly.” I got to wear a beautiful puffy dress with a green sash that said “Miss Friendly” and my name on it, and I got to ride on a sidecar of a bicycle with a beautiful arch of flowers for the parade. We went around the small town and everyone got to see my sash. I was so honored that I got chosen. And that was because I was friendly not just to my friends but also to everyone in my class and even the whole school. When a new girl joined our class, I befriended her and made sure she felt comfortable. Having a good reputation like that meant that everyone noticed that I was nice and friendly to others. So, I received the award because I had a good reputation of being friendly. *[Storyteller, add your own example of having a good reputation before others.]*

Ezra had a good reputation. He had done many things among the people that showed he was a man of high character. Because of his good reputation, he was able to appear before the king

with his petition. Ezra wanted to be able to go to Jerusalem and to bring others along with him. Ezra was such a respected man that the king granted his petition and gave him authority to appoint Jews to be over the ones in Jerusalem. The king even gave Ezra silver and gold to take to Jerusalem.

So Ezra became a leader by the way he behaved every day. He had many years of being known among the people, which gave him a very good reputation. Ezra was someone you could trust. He was so well-respected, because he displayed excellent character in his behavior and actions each day.

We too can become respected by others. We can be our best every day at school and among our friends.

Beginner Level, Block 8, Week 3 Ezra—Setting His Heart

Point to Emphasize: We want to be those who set goals.

Reference Reading: Ezra 7

Memory Verse: For Ezra had set his heart to seek the law of Jehovah and to do it and to teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel. (Ezra 7:10)

Story Sample

There is a phrase in our memory verse that is very interesting, that is, "Set his heart". We don't use this expression much anymore. What do you think that means? *[Let the children try to answer.]* Well, it means to be determined or to decide to do something. It is to REALLY want something and then to choose to do it. It's kind of like setting a goal.

Now we all know what that is. We've all decided to do something at one time or another, haven't we? When I was six years old I set my heart, or decided, or determined, or had a goal—however you want to say it—to learn how to ride a bike. I wanted to be able to ride the two-wheeler my cousin had handed down to us. It was a good goal. But I found out it wasn't as easy as I thought. There was a small hill right behind our house and I thought if I went to the top of the hill and started rolling down, I would be able to ride by myself. But I fell—again and again and again. I had set my heart to learn, but I just wasn't qualified to teach myself to ride a bike. But I was still determined to learn how to ride a bike! I thought about it and realized I knew someone who was qualified—my older sister. She knew how to ride a bike, so I asked her to help me and she came with me to the top of the hill again, this time, she held on to the bike at the back, so that as I went down, I could feel how it was to balance the bike. It took several trips to the top of the hill but eventually, I made it down all by myself. I was determined, and so I finally learned to ride a bike! *[Storyteller, add your own story from your experience about being determined to do something.]*

When you set a goal, you have something to focus on and work toward. Setting goals in life will help you to be a productive person. When you set a goal, you commit to it and work on it until you reach your goal! You don't give up! What are some goals you can set? Let's write some down together. What are some goals you can set at school? You can have the goal of counting to 50, learning to read a particular book or learning to write your name! How about at home? What goal can you set for yourself at home? You could learn how to make your bed, tie your shoelaces, or brush your teeth. How about in sports? You can have the goal of swimming underwater or learning how to ride a bike. Learning to play an instrument is a good goal. How about in children's meetings? You can have a goal of memorizing today's verse! *[Storyteller, it might help the children to visualize if you write these goals on the board.]*

Now, let me tell you what Ezra's goal was. Ezra set his heart, or you can say, he had the goal of learning God's Word. He wanted to learn God's Word so that he could go to Jerusalem and teach the people all about it! Wasn't that an excellent goal? We should all have that same goal! Our goals can be little or big goals! May we all be like Ezra, having the goal to teach God's Word to others!

Beginner Level, Block 8, Week 4

Ezra—A Scribe

Point to Emphasize: We can learn to be accurate in the things we do.

Reading Reference: Ezra 7:6; 4:7

Memory Verse: Do you see a man skilled in his work? / He will stand before kings...
(Proverbs 22:29a)

Story Sample

Do you remember who we have been talking about in our stories? That's right: Ezra! And do you remember that Ezra was a person who set his heart to learn God's Word? Good! Because of that, the Israelites who had returned to rebuild the house of God needed help from Ezra. They needed someone to instruct them in God's Word—someone who knew it well.

Ezra was just the right person for that. He was a scribe and a teacher. I think we all know what a teacher is, but does anyone know what a scribe is? *[Write the word "scribe" on the board.]* Back when Ezra was alive, a scribe was someone who read official documents and then wrote out copies of them. Today if you want a copy of something, you just photocopy it, right? But back then, they didn't have machines like that. Back then, if you wanted a copy, someone had to write it out by hand. That was a scribe's job. And since a scribe's job was to make copies, he had to be very careful in his work. If he skipped a word while copying, it could change the meaning of the whole paper! So, he had to copy EXACTLY. He could not miss a thing.

I don't think there are any people with the job of scribes today, but we do get some chances to act like a scribe. How many of you are learning to write your ABCs? Do you have a paper you copy letters from? Well, that is kind of like being a scribe! And when we trace and copy the letters, it's important to be careful. Who knows what letter this is? *[Write a letter E on the board].* Right! It's an E. But what if I were copying the E and I was not careful. What if I didn't write ALL the lines? *[Start to write another E for "EAT", but leave the bottom off so that it's an F to spell "FAT".]* I would end up with a totally different letter and word! That's an F, not an E! All because of a small mistake! That would be a big change! Or what I was writing the letter O, and I accidentally added an extra line—just a teeny tiny one, but... *(Write an O and then turn it into a Q.)* These things seem like such small mistakes, right? But they make a big difference. Scribes had to be so careful and exact! *[Storyteller, insert your own example of being careless in copying something.]* If being accurate means that we are careful and exact, what is the opposite of accurate? That's right, if we are not accurate, then we can become sloppy or careless in what we do.

Well, Ezra was a very good scribe. The Bible says that he was skilled in the law of Moses—that tells us that Ezra was very good at his job. He could copy important things down without making careless mistakes! When I read this, I thought, "Oh, it would be so wonderful to be accurate like that!" How do you think Ezra got so good at this? I think he must have practiced a lot, and he must have checked his work as he went. He probably had a lot of chances to practice—and we have that too! We have a lot of chances to practice being accurate and exact! Can you think of some things we do that require us to be careful like Ezra was? *[Writing our letters, telling our parents what time our soccer game starts, writing our name carefully on our papers at school, telling our parents exactly what happened at school, copying down the memory verse exactly at children's meeting, etc. Storyteller, these are just some ideas. Add some more and help the children to think of others.]* All of these are so good! The more we practice being accurate in these things, the more we will be just like Ezra in this way!

Beginner Level, Block 8, Week 5

Ezra—Taught the Word of God

Point to Emphasize: We can be those who know the Word of God to teach others.

Reference Reading: Nehemiah 8:1-9, 18

Memory Verse: Hear instruction, and be wise; / And do not neglect it. (Proverbs 8:33)

Story Sample

Ezra was well known for his knowledge of God's Word. The children of Israel who had returned to their homeland loved God, but they did not know His Word very well. This is why Ezra was such a big help to them. Ezra was someone who read God's Word and helped the people of God to understand it. Ezra was really important to God and the children of Israel!

When the children of Israel returned to their land, many of them did not know God's Word, so they lived their lives and worshipped God according to what they thought was right. But they did not know what God said about how they should live! And they did not know how God wanted them to worship Him! They did not know a lot of things, because they did not know God's Word.

Many people today are like this. They may know that God exists and may even love God, but they do not know His Word. Because of this, they never check God's Word to see if He likes the way they are living or worshipping Him. God says a lot in His Word. It is like a letter He has written to us! You can find out all about God and what He likes and dislikes by reading His Word. If we want to know God Himself, we need to learn about Him in His Word.

So let's return to Ezra and the children of Israel in the good land. All the people were gathered together into an open area, and Ezra would read the Word of God to them as they listened and read the book of the law. Probably many who were there that day had never heard God's Word. Of those who had heard or read God's Word, not many may have understood it. So, as Ezra read, he and others would help the people understand God's Word. It's so important to know and understand the Word of God!

One time I stayed with a family who had four children. Every evening the family would sit on the couch for a few minutes and read the Bible. The oldest girls were eight-year-old twins, their younger brother was five, and the baby was about two. The children sat on their parents' lap as their parents read a short portion of the Bible to them. That is such a good family practice. *[Storyteller, insert your own story about reading the Word with your family.]*

What are some things you do together as a family? Would you like to read the Bible with your family at home? *[Encourage them to bring this up with their parents at home.]*

Ezra read and explained God's Word, and that really helped the children of Israel. By hearing God's Word, they realized that God was not happy about some of the things they did. They became very sad and were sorry. Then they made some changes. They were God's people, and they wanted to please God according to His Word. They changed some things in their living to please Him, and they began to worship God according to His Word.

We are from families who care for God, so it is the same with us! It is important that we read and understand God's Word. The Bible is not like any other book. It is not common or ordinary. It is a holy book, because God is holy and the Bible is God's speaking. We can learn the Word of

God by reading and memorizing verses, then one day we will be like Ezra—able to teach the Word of God to others. Even now, we can share a Bible verse or a song with others.

So this week, let's all encourage our families to take some time each day to read God's Word together.

Beginner Level, Block 8, Week 6
Nehemiah—A Cupbearer and a Pleasant Person

Point to Emphasize: We can be those who are pleasant, even in doing the small, ordinary things.

Reference Reading: Nehemiah 2:1-8

Memory Verse: A joyful heart makes a cheerful countenance... (Proverbs 15:13a)

Story Sample

A few weeks ago, we started to talk about three leaders among God's people—Zerubbabel, Nehemiah, and Ezra. Today we will hear more about Nehemiah. Nehemiah was not a captain in the army, nor was he a counselor to the king, but he did work in the king's palace. His job put him in contact with the king every day. It was an ordinary job of a servant. He was the king's cupbearer. This means that whenever the king wanted something to drink, he was the one who filled the cup and took it to him. He was like the waiter or waitress at a restaurant who comes and refills your glasses with water. It was just an ordinary job; nothing was outstanding about it.

There are lots of jobs like this today, just ordinary jobs—the crossing guard, the clerk at the grocery store, the lunchroom monitor, the recess monitor, etc. A lot of times you don't even know their names, but you see them nearly every day or every week. When I was about your age, there was a custodian at our school, whom I still remember. I don't remember his name or what he looked like, BUT I remember his smile. He was always smiling, saying, "Hi" to us, and whistling as he worked. He was just a pleasant person. Sometimes he was called into the lunchroom to clean up a spill. He would come in smiling and saying "Hi" to us as he passed the tables of students. He would then find the mess and start cleaning. He would start whistling too. He was an easy person to be around because he smiled and said "hi" to everyone. He made us all want to be a janitor like him, because it seemed he had the best job and was happy doing it. On the other hand, some recess monitors at our school always FROWNED at us. They never looked happy and they did not speak nicely to us. *[Storyteller, include your own story about a pleasant person.]*

Well, Nehemiah was like this. In his job he did not have much interaction with the king. He did not say anything to the king and the king did not speak to him. But the king knew of Nehemiah, because Nehemiah was a pleasant person when he would bring drinks to the king.

The Bible says that one day, when Nehemiah took something to the king to drink, Nehemiah's face was sad. Right away the king noticed and said, "Why is your face sad?" Wow, for the king to notice his sad face means that Nehemiah must have always had a pleasant, smiling face when he served the king. This was probably the first time in all those years that the king had seen him with a sad face. The king knew that something serious must have happened for Nehemiah to have had a sad face.

Because the king spoke to him and asked him about his sad face, Nehemiah could tell the king the terrible news he had about the children of Israel who had returned to Jerusalem. They were not doing well, and Nehemiah felt he must also go there for some time to help them. Since he had pleasantly served the king every day for years, the king granted his request. This is how Nehemiah became a leader.

It is really something how God used such a pleasant man as Nehemiah. I'm sure that even as a young boy, Nehemiah learned to be happy in all the small things he had to do. We can be like Nehemiah; we can learn to smile and be a pleasant person with a cheerful countenance even when we are doing things that seem small.

Beginner Level, Block 8, Week 7
Nehemiah—Aggressive in Volunteering Himself to Help

Point to Emphasize: We can volunteer to help others.

Reference Reading: Nehemiah 2:1-8

Memory Verse: Even a child makes himself known by his deeds, / Whether his work is pure and whether it is upright. (Proverbs 20:11)

Story Sample

Last week, we heard about someone in the Bible called Nehemiah. Who remembers who he was? Right! He was the cupbearer for the king. He was always a pleasant person, and the king knew this very well. But one day, Nehemiah had a sad face because of the terrible news of what was happening to the children of Israel. Deep inside he knew he needed to help. Today we will see HOW he helped. You see, there are different ways of helping. You can help, because someone tells you to do it, you can help because someone asks you to do it, or you can help because you volunteer to do it.

Nehemiah, being so interested in God's building, took this opportunity to speak boldly to the king. He told the king that the city where his family was from had been destroyed. He told him that Jerusalem lay in waste, and its gates were consumed with fire. The king asked Nehemiah, "What do you want?" Before he answered the king, Nehemiah prayed silently to the God of heaven, and then he said to the king, "Send me to Judah to the city...that I may rebuild it."

Nehemiah volunteered to do this hard work! He was bold and aggressive, putting all his energy into doing something in Jerusalem. No one else had done anything about the broken-down wall, but Nehemiah asked the king if HE could go do something about it. Nehemiah was willing to go and rebuild Jerusalem. Nehemiah saw a need and volunteered to do it without being asked.

Sometimes a person asks for volunteers to help with something. We raise our hands if we are willing to do it. It is good to volunteer in this way, but it is even better to volunteer without being asked. When mom or dad comes home with the shopping bags, do you say, "What did you buy for me?" Or do you say, "Can I help you carry those bags?" We can volunteer to help our parents carry the bags inside and put the items away. We can ask to help our parents before they ask us. This makes our parents very happy.

One day my dad was cooking dinner in the kitchen. I noticed that there were no knives, forks, or plates on the table yet, so I asked my dad, "Can I set the table for you?" He was so happy that I had volunteered to help him! *[Storyteller, insert a personal example of when you volunteered to do something without being asked.]*

Do you volunteer to do anything at home or at school? *[Help the children identify some tasks: take out the trash, set/clear the dinner table, tidy up toys when you know others are coming over...]* I'm sure that your parents and teachers are very happy when you volunteer to help without being asked. They respect that you are bold and aggressive to step in and help!

Nehemiah volunteered to go to Jerusalem and repair the city wall. No one asked him to do it, but he wanted to go. The king not only granted Nehemiah permission to go to Jerusalem, but also gave him wood to use for building the gates of the city. Nehemiah knew that God had helped him get everything he needed. This week, let's look for ways to volunteer to help others.

Beginner Level, Block 8, Week 8 **Nehemiah—Applying Himself to Work**

Point to Emphasize: We can be those who work hard until we complete the task given to us.

Reference Reading: Nehemiah 5:14-19

Memory Verse: And I also applied myself to the work... (Nehemiah 5:16a)

Story Sample

In our memory verse for today there is a very interesting phrase, “*applied myself*”. What does that even mean? I went to the dictionary, and I learned that to apply yourself to something means that you work hard in order to complete something successfully. In simple words, “*to apply myself to work*” means to be a hard worker. This is to be diligent.

What is the difference between a hard worker and a lazy person? A hard worker “stays on task” even when something is difficult, whereas a lazy person might decide to quit when they see something is difficult. A hard worker will try different ways to complete a task when what they are doing is not working, while a lazy person may get distracted easily. A hard worker will work hard until the goal is achieved, while a lazy person may take multiple breaks before the task is completed.

Let me give you an example. When I was about your age, every Saturday morning was a “work day” at my house. Because we had no school, my mom would have a list of chores that needed to be done BEFORE we could play. The instructions were simple: “When we are ALL done with our tasks, THEN we can decide what we will do with our free time for the rest of the day.” There were some days when I was just lazy and didn’t want to work. A simple task that could have taken me 5 minutes took me almost 30 minutes. I would get distracted so easily! I still remember my mom’s voice, “Are you all done? Why are you just looking out the window?” WOW! Without realizing, I was distracted and forgot what I was doing! BUT, there were some days where I was a hard worker! On those days, I was able to stay “on task”. I remember when some tasks were difficult, I would immediately go to my mom and ask her to teach me how to do them. Often, before I realized it, we finished our tasks and could go out to play! *[Storyteller, bring in a personal story of you being lazy or a hard worker.]*

Last week we heard about Nehemiah, right? Nehemiah volunteered to go and rebuild the wall of the city of Jerusalem, which had been destroyed. When Nehemiah went there, he was not lazy, he was a hard worker. He applied himself to work. He and all the ones who were with him did not receive any kind of payment. Nehemiah and the ones who were with him “stayed on task”. They did not get distracted and they all worked hard until the job was done! Even after becoming a governor, Nehemiah could have asked for a piece of land or even food that was reserved for the governors, but he did not ask for any of these. Instead, he fed all those who came to help him work.

I hope that whenever you are given a task you will not be lazy, but you will be like Nehemiah. I hope that all of you, even today, will be hard workers. As our memory verse says, you will be ones who “applies yourself to the work”.

Beginner Level, Block 8, Week 9
Nehemiah—Seeking Help

Point to Emphasize: We can be those who are willing to seek help when we need it.

Reading Reference: Nehemiah 8:1-2 (and footnote 1 on verse 2)

Memory Verse: And he who has understanding may acquire sound counsel... (Proverbs 1:5b)

Story Sample

Do you remember Nehemiah? Who remembers who he was? That's right! Well, there is something else that's really special about Nehemiah; he was a person who could ask others for help! Though he was once a cupbearer, he now had a high position as the governor, but he didn't let that stop him from seeking help. He knew that there were things he could not do himself, and he was willing to ask others to help him!

Nehemiah wanted to help the children of Israel know God's Word in a proper way, but he was not the best person to do this. Do you remember the stories we told you about Ezra? Well, Ezra and Nehemiah were both alive at the same time! Ezra was famous for his knowledge of the Word of God, and Nehemiah knew that he could not help God's people without Ezra. Ezra knew God's word so well, so Nehemiah asked him for help!

This makes me really admire Nehemiah! It is not easy to ask someone else for help, especially if we have been given some authority or power. Recently, I was watching two little brothers play together. The older one liked to do everything first. He liked to choose what game they would play, he liked his cars to drive first in the line, and he liked his toy soldiers to march in front of his brother's soldiers. The younger brother didn't seem to mind, though, but let his brother be first. At one point, they decided they wanted to play with different toys. But, the problem was that those toys were in the closet, and the closet was dark! The older brother was afraid of the dark, and he did not want to go in there alone. But the younger brother was not afraid of the dark. I watched to see what these two boys would do. On one hand, the older brother needed the younger brother's help to get into the closet, but if the younger brother helped, the older brother wouldn't get to be first. The younger brother would go into the closet first, because he wasn't afraid. The older brother had to make a choice—was it more important to him to be first, or was it more important to get the toys and keep playing? In the end, he chose to ask his brother for help! I was so proud of him! The older brother realized he needed help, and he was willing to ask for it! And the younger brother kindly gave the help. They got the toys and played together for a while. One could do what the other couldn't. This always makes a good team! *[Storyteller, insert your own story about asking someone for help.]*

Nehemiah and Ezra were like this. Nehemiah couldn't do what Ezra could do, but he wasn't worried about losing his high position because of it. He just wanted to lead God's people and was willing to ask Ezra for help. Because of that, God's people were able to hear God's word! Let's be like Nehemiah! We can ask for help when we need it!

Beginner Level, Block 8, Week 10 **Esther—Obeying Mordecai**

Point to Emphasize: We can be obedient to follow our parent's instructions.

Reading Reference: Esther 1-2

Memory Verse: Teach me, O Jehovah, Your way; / I will walk in Your truth... (Psalm 86:11a)

Story Sample

Did you know that there are only two books in the Bible named after a woman—Esther and Ruth? Today I'd like to tell you a little about the story of Esther. Her story is very special.

It begins in a city named Susa, with a powerful king named Ahasuerus and his beautiful queen, named Vashti. There was also a young woman named Esther, who lived in the city of Susa. Even though she was living in the same city as the king and the queen, her life was much different than theirs. Esther was an orphan when she was young, and her older cousin, Mordecai, adopted her as his own child. Both Mordecai and Esther were Jews, God's people.

As Esther was raised by Mordecai, she was a very obedient girl. She followed the instructions he gave her. There is a verse that says, "For Esther did what Mordecai told her, as she had when he was bringing her up" (Esther 2:20). Because she started in this way of obedience as a child, she continued to be obedient, even as a young woman.

On the other hand, was Vashti. Vashti was a disobedient queen, and refused to follow her husband, the king. Because she refused to follow him, the queen was dethroned and removed from her position. Her disobedience got her in a lot of trouble.

Does being disobedient get you in trouble sometimes? Most of the time, I was a pretty obedient child who followed my parent's instructions. But there were times that I disobeyed and insisted on doing what I wanted to do. Whenever I disobeyed, I ended up in trouble by hurting myself and having to go to the hospital or not being allowed to see my friends. It's much better to obey what your parents say. *[Storyteller, give your own experience of obeying your parents.]*

After this, the king knew that the kingdom needed a queen. He needed to find a good queen that would be suitable. So, he began to search for the best queen. Now, do you think you would pick Esther to be queen if you were king? I don't think I would! After all, she was an orphan. She didn't even have parents. I'm sure that her life was a poor life compared to the king's. How would she know how to behave? Would she have the skills needed to be a queen? NO!

So how did what I'm about to tell you happen? It happened because Esther did what Mordecai said. He instructed her exactly what she should do, step by step, and she did it. As a result, the king chose Esther to be his queen!

Later, Esther was able to greatly help all the Jews because of her obedience to Mordecai's instructions. She chose the way of obedience and, as a result, she was a great help to her people. Wow!

Doesn't this make you want to be like Esther? And we can! Every day we can listen and follow our parent's instructions. Then as we grow older, by choosing the way of obedience now, we may even be able to help others later. Next week, remember to tell us what you did to obey your parents or teacher during the week.