

## Being Trustworthy Week 1

Point to Emphasize: We can be trustworthy to do our job/responsibilities.

Reference Reading: Nehemiah 1:11b; 2:1

Memory Verse: A faithful man will abound with blessings... (Proverbs 28:20a)

### Story Sample

Now, we know something about Ezra in the Bible. Around this same time there was another man we should know about. His name was Nehemiah. He worked for the king of Persia, the leader of the most important Empire of that time. One thing all top government leaders need is to have someone around to guard or protect them. Today a president or top leader has bodyguards in whom they trust to keep them safe from harm.

In Nehemiah's time, kings were afraid that their enemies would try to poison them. So they had a special servant, one that they could trust, to be their cupbearer. The cupbearer had to make sure that the king's drink was safe to drink. Sometimes the cupbearer even had to take a sip first so that the king was sure that it was safe to drink. The king of Persia chose Nehemiah to do this important job. Nehemiah's eyes must be watchful of the king's drink at all time. It demanded a lot of attention. Nehemiah was a trustworthy person and the king trusted Nehemiah to protect him.

One day, a friend asked me to look after her baby. The baby could crawl around and liked to put things in her mouth. It was my job to make sure she did not hurt herself and eat things she shouldn't. I was really happy that she trusted me to take good care of her daughter. Do you think this mother would have given that job to just anybody? No, she needed someone she could trust to watch her baby carefully. *[Insert a personal example of when you were trusted to look after someone or something special.]*

When your mom gives you money for your school lunch, she trusts that you will not lose it and that you will use it for lunch and not on candy. When your mom says, "You can go out and play after you finish your homework," does she have to double check to make sure you finished your homework or can she trust you to do as she said?

Nehemiah was really trusted by the king of Persia. Nehemiah did a great job being the king's cupbearer and, what's more, he even did his job happily. He was never sad in the presence of the king.

What can you be trusted to do at home or at school? Now what kind of things might we do this week to show others that we can be trusted? *[Write down the ideas from the children.]* When we see each other next week we can share how we practiced being trustworthy. *[It would be helpful to pass along the list of ideas from the children to those serving the following week. Leaving the list up on the white board and saving it for next week may help the continuation of the story.]*

## **Caring for Others Week 2**

Point to Emphasize: We can care for others and pray to God.

Reference Reading: Nehemiah 1:1-3

Memory Verse: Beloved, let us love one another, because love is of God... (1 John 4:7a)

### Story Sample

*[Start this week by giving an example of being trusted by someone to do something. See if any of the children have something that happened this week on the same point. Check with the serving ones from the previous week for ideas from the children.]*

One day, Nehemiah's brother Hanani came to visit him. Hanani had come from Judah, where Jerusalem was. Nehemiah cared very much about God's people and about Jerusalem, so he asked how the Jews were doing there. When we care for others we often ask how they are doing. *[Insert your own story how you asked about someone else because you cared about them.]*

Sometimes the news concerning others may be good. Sometimes it may not be so good. For example, one time a small group of friends found out that one of their friend's dad was having an operation. So, they decided to make some "get well" cards for him.

Hanani told Nehemiah some sad news. The people who had returned to Jerusalem were in a very bad condition. The city wall that was meant to protect the temple had been torn down, and the gates of Jerusalem had been burned with fire! Enemies had come and torn down this wall and destroyed the gates to the city. There were heaps of stones and burned wood. It was a horrible mess.

Nehemiah had been very concerned about Jerusalem and the Jews who were living there. From Hanani he now heard that the city wall was broken down. This news made him so very sad. When he heard this terrible news he wept and prayed to God. This showed he really cared about Jerusalem and his people.

Have you ever heard some news that made you so sad that it caused you to pray to God about it? Maybe someone who is dear to us had gotten sick or broken an arm. Wouldn't that cause us to feel sad and to pray for that person?

Sometimes we can do something to show we care. Has your mom ever taken dinner over to a family who just had a baby? This is a way to show we care. She heard the news that a new baby had been born, and she did something to show she cared.

Just like the children who made the "get well" cards for their friend's father, we can all do things to show others that we care. What things did we do last week that showed we cared about others? *[Hopefully from what the children say you can wrap up this time by using their examples and bringing in more ideas.]*

## **Doing Something to Help Week 3**

Point to Emphasize: We can volunteer to help others.

Reference Reading: Nehemiah 2:1-8

Memory Verse: Therefore all that you wish men would do to you, so also you do to them; for this is the law and the prophets. (Matthew 7:12)

### Story Sample

*[Start this week by giving an example of caring for someone. See if any of the children have something that happened this week on the same point.]*

After getting the report on the situation in Jerusalem, Nehemiah became sad. The king noticed that Nehemiah was sad. *Never* before had Nehemiah been sad in the presence of the king! Before this he had always been happy. So, when the king saw that Nehemiah was sad, he knew that something was very wrong with him. The king asked Nehemiah, "Why is your face sad, since you are not ill? This is nothing other than sadness of heart."

Being aggressive for God's building, Nehemiah took this opportunity to speak boldly. He told the king that the city of Jerusalem, 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, strong in his character, and he was aggressive to do 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 hand 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. *[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? (E.g. 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 to build 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.

## **Working Together Week 4**

Point to Emphasize: We can work together for the benefit of everybody.

Reference Reading: Nehemiah 2:9-18; 3:1-32

Memory Verse: Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor; For if they fall, the one will lift up his companion...  
(Ecclesiastes 4:9-10a)

### Story Sample

Nehemiah volunteered to go to Jerusalem so that he could rebuild the city wall. Nehemiah also knew that if a strong city wall was rebuilt, the holy temple would be safe. The king of Persia allowed Nehemiah to go to Jerusalem and provided the supplies he would need to build.

Nehemiah arrived in Jerusalem with the soldiers that the king had sent with him. Nehemiah waited until it was dark and then went out to inspect Jerusalem. As he went around the city, he found that the walls really were broken down and the gates really had been burned with fire, just as his brother had told him.

Nehemiah could never have rebuilt the city walls and gates all by himself. He needed help! So when Nehemiah returned, he gathered the people together. He told them that God had prepared all he needed to come and rebuild the city —the permission from the king as well as the supplies. He said, "Come and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem so that we will no longer be a reproach." The people answered Nehemiah, "Let us rise up and build." Then they prepared themselves to begin the work.

It is so good when people work together for a reason. When I was younger it was my responsibility to clean the whole house every Saturday. One day, my three younger brothers built a tree house in the forest nearby and wanted to show it to me. They were so excited. I wanted to go so I told them that if we would all clean the house together we could see the tree house sooner. They all volunteered to help me. We worked together until our house was very clean, and then we all got to go to the tree house and play. *[Insert a personal experience of working together with others.]*

There were all sorts of people that came to repair the walls and gates. Entire families worked on the wall together. They were each given parts of the wall to take care of. People with different jobs all stopped what they were doing to help build the wall. The perfumers, goldsmiths, merchants—even priests and rulers— stopped what they were doing and worked together in teams to rebuild Jerusalem's wall. They all wanted to work together to make both their city and its temple safe.

*[Discuss with the children ways we can stop our own activities to help others, such as coming together to clean the meeting hall, going to help saints move, helping with repairs for the meeting hall, etc.]*

## **Be Tender-hearted and Kind Week 5**

Point to Emphasize: Be kind and do not laugh at others.

Reference Reading: Nehemiah 2:17, 19

Memory Verse: What is desirable in a man is his kindness... (Proverbs 19:22a)

### Story Sample

The work on the wall of the city of Jerusalem had begun. The Jews had come together to fix the wall. They were all joined together for the same reason and were working together in such a good way.

But not everything was perfect. The Bible tells us that others were looking down at the Jews who lived in Jerusalem and worked on the temple. The Jews had become a reproach, which means that others criticized and expressed their disapproval of them. The non-Jewish people who lived in that area mocked them. They were laughing at God's people. They made fun of them in an unpleasant way because they despised (disliked) them.

To be laughed at feels horrible. Has anyone at school ever laughed at you when you tripped up or fell over? They might have said, "Ha ha, you fell over." When that happens it is very painful. It hurts when others laugh at you, and it makes you sad. It's much better when someone comes over and says, "Are you ok? Can I help you up? Do you need a Band-Aid? Here's a chair to sit down on."

*[Insert an example of when you decided to be kind while others were laughing at someone.]*

Being kind can be the hardest thing to do when others are laughing at or making fun of someone. It is much easier to just let it go. But to decide to do something kind while others are making fun takes some courage.

Can anyone remember being in this kind of situation recently? Did you just stand aside and let it go or were you the one who was kind and showed you cared?

These days I hear about too many incidents of children making fun of someone in a mean way. At school or while walking home too many times a few children would pick on someone. Will we be the ones going along with others being mean or will we be ones with the courage to be kind instead?

Let's all look for ways to show our kindness to others.

## **Being Persistent Week 6**

Point to Emphasize: Don't let someone's negative speaking discourage you.

Reference Reading: Nehemiah 4:1-6

Memory Verse: Guard your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking deceit.  
(Psalm 34:13)

### Story Sample

*[Start this week by giving an example of being kind to others. See if any of the children have something that happened this last week on the same point.]*

Nehemiah and the Jews were rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem and making lots of repairs. But while they were working diligently, some of their enemies, Sanballat and Tobiah, came to frighten the people working on the wall. They wanted to make them stop their work.

Sanballat and Tobiah came and spoke to discourage the Jews who were working on the wall. They told the Jews that they were feeble and did not have the strength to do such hard physical work. They told the Jews that it would take far too long to repair the wall and the gates. The Jews would wear themselves out and still not be done. They told the Jews that even the work they were doing was very poorly done. Sanballat and Tobiah spoke all kinds of things to discourage the Jews, to try to get them to stop their work.

What does it mean to be persistent? [Let the children answer.] To be persistent is to refuse to give up. Nehemiah and the Jews were persistent while they were building the wall. They were persistent even when their enemies came to mock them, to conspire to attack them and to create confusion among them. It might be easy to be persistent when everybody around you encourages you to finish what you are doing. But, let's think for a minute. Is it easy to be persistent when someone next to you is mocking you?

It is easy to give up when we are discouraged. Like many of you I have tried to learn to play a musical instrument. But I would get so discouraged because even when I practiced a simple piece it did not sound very nice. And then, to make things worse, sometimes my friends would say things like, "You'll never learn to play. You're no good at it." But I would not give up. One thing that would help me not to give up was to listen to a friend play. That friend had been playing the piano for years and he made the song sound so good. I told myself that if I stuck with it, I could get better. But if I quit, I would never be able to play. It helps us keep at it when we are encouraged. *(Insert a personal example of how you did not let others' negative speaking discourage you).*

*[\*\*\*This could be wrapped up with examples from your children about things or projects that they have been discouraged about and how they still finished. Or how our speaking can discourage or encourage others.]*

## **Being Determined Week 7**

Point to Emphasize: We can be determined; we can finish even a hard task.

Reference Reading: Nehemiah 4:1-6

Memory Verse: Therefore also we are determined,...to gain the honor of being well pleasing to Him. (2 Corinthians 5:9)

### Story Sample

Remember last week we learned about persistence and how Nehemiah and the Jews were persistent while rebuilding the wall. All those who had begun to work on the wall carried on with the building work, even though they were being laughed at. They did not give up! They persisted and because of their persistence the wall got higher and higher. Building the wall and making all the repairs was hard work. But the people had a heart to work. Those Jews did not care if it was hard! They were determined to finish what they had begun.

Today we want to talk about how determined they were. Now, I know you are probably thinking, "What's the difference between persistence and determination? Aren't they the same?" Well, in a way they are, but there is a difference. Persistence is something you do, whereas determination is what you set your mind to think about.

For example, rebuilding that wall was a big thing. They worked on the wall with **persistence**, never giving up. Lots of times we need to be persistent in doing small everyday things. Sometimes we need to be persistent in cleaning up our room instead of giving up before it is finished.

On the other hand, it takes **determination** to learn those multiplication facts (*use examples that fit the age group*). We have to set our mind to do things like these, otherwise we just make excuses for ourselves or complain. It is always easier to sit at the table and whine about how hard it is to learn the multiplication tables. BUT, if you are determined, you will say them over and over and over and over and over again. You will keep doing it because you are determined! That will pay off and the task will be completed!

Before too long the wall in Jerusalem was built to half its height, all because the people had a heart to work and were determined not to stop no matter what anyone said or how hard the work was.

*[Insert your own example of learning something hard by persistence and determination.]*

What are some things that we can practice being determined in through this next week, in the same way the Jews who were rebuilding the wall were determined?



## **Taking the Proper Precautions Week 8**

Point to Emphasize: Heed the warnings and take action to avoid problems.

Reference Reading: Nehemiah 4:7-23

Memory Verse: He who heeds instruction is on the path of life... (Proverbs 10:17a)

### Story Sample

*[Start this week by giving an example of being determined. See if any of the children have something that happened this last week on the same point.]*

The Jews were not the only ones who did not give up. The enemies were also persistent. When the enemies heard that the gaps in the wall were being finished, they became very angry. All the enemies came together to plot and fight against Jerusalem. They were determined to stop the building. They devised a plan on how to go into the midst of the building work without being noticed. Once they were that close to the building work, they would be able to destroy the builders. That would stop the work.

Some Jews heard about the enemies' plot and were very scared. They came to Jerusalem and warned the builders to look out for the enemies. They warned the builders again and again and again – ten times they warned those in Jerusalem to tell the builders to be careful.

After being warned 10 different times, what do you think the Jews who were rebuilding did? [Let the children answer.] They prayed and then they took steps to secure the city from attack. They posted watchmen (or look outs) day and night to be on the lookout. Then each one who was building also had weapons to fight off any attack. They even took turns watching and working. This is the necessary response to the threat of attack. It would have been unwise to ignore the warnings and not to take these precautions.

But what about us? Do we pay attention to the warnings we have been given? When the "don't walk" sign is blinking, do we still dash across the street? Do you always put on your kneepads and helmet to skateboard like your mom has repeatedly instructed you to? Do you buckle your seat belt right away when you get into the car or does someone have to remind you each time? *[Storyteller, please add to the list according to your own family experience.]*

WOW! These questions show how easy it is for us to ignore warnings and not take the proper precautions.

*[\*\*\*Wrap this up with having the children talk about what precautions they need to work on taking.]*

## Following a Plan Week 9

Point to Emphasize: We can be those that follow a plan.

Reference Reading: Nehemiah 4:1-23

Memory Verse: Every plan is established by counsel... (Proverbs 20:18a)

### Story Sample

Nehemiah cared for God's people and the rebuilding work. He came up with a plan to keep the people and the city safe. Nehemiah instructed half of his servants to work on rebuilding the wall and had the other half guarding them with spears, swords, shields, and bows. For those who built the walls and those who carried burdens, they would take the load with one hand doing the work and with the other hand holding a weapon. As for the builders, each would strap a sword to his side while they built.

Nehemiah realized that the builders would not always be near each other, so he placed a man with a trumpet next to himself. If the enemy attacked, the trumpet would be blown as a warning for everyone to hear. When the people heard the trumpet's warning, they would stop what they were doing and go join Nehemiah.

Nehemiah made a very good plan to protect the city! But what would have happened if some of the builders did not follow his plan? (Answer: those builders would not have been protected.) Big problems would have been caused if some people went along with the plan and others did not. Each person had to choose whether or not to go along with the plan.

We have this same choice at school. For example, our teacher has a plan, a way for us to get out of the classroom, down the hall, and out to the lunch area. What is that plan? That plan is for everyone to line up, single file. As we walk down the hallway in this line, we should all stay on the right side of the hallway, right? Can we honestly say that we follow that plan? I hope so. But I also know that some students get out of the line sometimes and mess around as they go to lunch. They ignore the teacher's plan, and it causes problems. *[Include your own example of this.]*

All the builders followed Nehemiah's plan and finally, after fifty-two days, the wall was finished! They built a huge city wall in such a short amount of time! Everyone worked with Nehemiah according to his plan, and they built a strong wall around Jerusalem with gates that would protect the holy temple and God's people.

*[Encourage the children to discuss how they would make a plan to build something. You could possibly have them build something (say a house) with popsicle sticks. But they would have to write up their plans first. They could even work on it in teams.]*

## **Taking Care of Details Week 10**

Point to Emphasize: We should be faithful to take care of details.

Reference Reading: Nehemiah 7:1-4

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

### Story Sample

It was an amazing thing for the walls to be built in only 52 days! Only God could be behind such a thing. And the enemies of the Jews knew this and were afraid of the Jews. Surely the God of the Jews was to be feared.

It would be wonderful if the story could end here, with the finishing of the building. But the story in Nehemiah did not end here. There were details that now needed to be taken care of. Everything needed to be put in a proper order.

When you have a big group for dinner and everyone has a wonderful time, isn't it great? But does the evening end after everyone leaves? No, there are usually things that need to be done when everyone is gone. Maybe the dishes need to be done, or the chairs put away, or the lights turned off, and the doors locked. These are details that need to be taken care of. *[Give an example from your family life.]*

After the walls were built, there were details that needed to be worked out. So Nehemiah appointed some to do certain jobs. Though the walls were built, the doors still needed to be set up. He appointed gatekeepers to watch the gates so that the city would be safe. He also appointed singers and Levites to serve. He put his brother Hanani, as well as Hananiah, the commander of the citadel, in charge of the city. Then he instructed them when to open the gates and how to keep watch of the city.

In a family there are lots of things that need to be taken care of. Parents do the major things (doing laundry, grocery shopping, cooking, etc.), but there are still lots of other things needed to keep the house in order. After dinner, is it mom who does everything? No, we all should help. Some homes like to use charts. Each child has a chore on the chart. *[Show example]* Other families like the children to remember their chores on their own. *[Lead children to discuss how their family takes care of the chores.]*

Next week come back and share with us how you helped take care of your family or your home in all details.

## **Fearing God Week 11**

Point to Emphasize: We should have a proper fear of God.

Reference Reading: Nehemiah 7:1-4

Memory Verse: ...Indeed, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom... (Job 28:28b)

### Story Sample

*[Review last week.]*

Why do you think Nehemiah put Hanani in charge? Do you think it was just because he was Nehemiah's brother? No! The Bible says that he did this because Hanani was a faithful man and feared God more than most did. He was the right one for the job. So, if he was faithful, that meant that he was responsible and would always do what needed to be done.

What about fearing God? It's a very good thing to fear God. It keeps us safe. To fear God means to realize that He is far greater than us. To fear God means that we do not take Him lightly. This is a matter of the heart.

We can say that you fear someone because you respect and honor them. You realize they are the authority and you fear them, following everything they say. Let's take the police, for example. Before I start to drive, I make sure I have my driver license in my purse. I make sure my phone is put away. I make sure we all have our seat belts buckled and that all my rear mirrors are set. When I am driving, I look at my speed so I don't go over the speed limit. Why do I do this? I do it because I fear the police. I am not afraid of the police, however I fear them because they are God's authority while I drive. I can't mock the police. I need to fear them. *[Insert your own example of showing fear to God or others that are placed by God.]*

When I was growing up, some of my friends were reckless. They had no fear. They would do things that their parents would never let them do. They did not fear their parents, their teachers, or God, which meant that they did what they wanted. They did not consider how their parents would feel about it.

So Hanani was the right one to take charge of Jerusalem. He was faithful to care for all the people responsibly, and he feared God. That meant he would always consider what would please God before doing anything.

*[Use the remaining time to talk to the children about the fear of God, so that you can be sure they have the correct idea about it. That may include understanding the difference between "fear" and "afraid".]*

## **Asking for Help Week 12**

Point to Emphasize: We need to be willing to ask for help if someone is more able.

Reference Reading: Nehemiah 8:1-12

Memory Verse: Ask and it shall be given to you; seek and you shall find; knock and it shall be opened to you. (Matthew 7:7)

### Story Sample

Even though the building of Jerusalem was finished, there was still something more that needed to be done. The people needed a change as well; they needed to be educated with God's word. Most of them had been born while they were captives in Babylon, so they all grew up not knowing anything about God's word. What a shame! Most of you have heard a lot of stories from the Bible, even as young as you are. You are so blessed! But these people didn't know anything about who God was or what He wanted.

Nehemiah knew that the scribes knew God's word the best. He had done a very good job leading in the building of the temple, but he knew that the scribes studied and were best to present God's word to the people. So he knew others were better suited for this particular job.

When I was young, I knew a lot about art – what colors to mix, how to draw and how to paint. My younger sister knew nothing about art, but she knew all about sewing. One day, my friend gave me some beautiful fabric; it was yellow silk. I decided to make a blouse and paint on it for decoration. So I cut a panel of fabric and painted a beautiful design on it. When it came to making the blouse, I was lost. I didn't know where to begin. Now, I could have tried to do it by myself. But I knew I would just make a mess of it. So whom did I go to? Yes, my sister. She was the right one for the job. I asked my sister because she was able to do the job in the best way. And when it was finished, I had a beautiful blouse painted with flowers. *[Storyteller: use your own example.]*

So Nehemiah knew who would be the best one to explain the word of God. It was Ezra, the scribe that Nehemiah called on. He was willing to ask someone who knew more than he did. He wasn't too proud to admit that he didn't know everything. Nehemiah was wise to have others take care of things that they were better suited for.

*[Give an example of when you were too proud to ask for help and the trouble that it caused.]*

So, Nehemiah gathered all of the people of Jerusalem together in the open area of the city and had Ezra come to read from God's word. And the people listened! From first light to midday, they listened to Ezra attentively. They were so happy to have the word of God explained to them in the best way.

## **Spending Our Time to Learn Week 13**

Point to Emphasize: We should use our time on things that matter.

Reference Reading: Nehemiah 9

Memory Verse: That the wise man may hear and increase in learning... (Proverbs 1:5a)

### Story Sample

*[Review last week 1-2 minutes.]*

The people of Israel in Jerusalem had gathered to listen to Ezra reading from God's Word. Then those who were Jews (descendants of Israel) separated themselves from those who were foreigners (not Jews). They spent one fourth of the day reading the law, and they spent one fourth of the day praying and worshipping God. That means that they spent half of their day in the matters concerning God. *[Write  $\frac{1}{4} + \frac{1}{4} = \frac{1}{2}$  on the board.]* They really made good use of their time. They spent this much time listening to God's Word because they wanted to know how to be God's people. They started out not knowing much about God, but by spending their time in this way they began to know Him. We always need to give our time to things we need to learn.

So, Let's say you are awake for 16 hours every day. That means that you would spend four hours studying God's Word and four hours talking to God. Wow! I don't know about you, but I know for a fact I don't spend this much time to learn about God. But I do know that I start each day with praying and reading God's Word. Then, throughout my day, I pray short prayers while I am doing things. And if I sit down for a break, I try to read something about the Lord. I'm not even sure how much time I actually spend on the Lord. I think this week I will keep track of how I spend my time each day. How about you? Wouldn't you like to know how you spend your time? For craft today, let's make a chart where we can keep track of how we spend our time this week. Then we can take a look at it next week. *[Serving ones: For the craft activity, please design a chart to track time spent on various things each day.]*

There are many things to spend time on. Think about how you use your time during the day. How much time do you spend doing homework? Chores? School? Playing? Do you spend any time reading the Bible, singing the songs we sing here or learning verses with your family? *[Add it up on the board.]* You are in school much of the day, but to really learn your math skills or spelling words well, you need to spend some time on it after school. The more time you spend on learning these things the better you will be at them.

The children of Israel used their time on something that was really important: studying God's Word, praying and worshipping God. Next week when you come back, I would like to hear some stories about how you spent your time during the week and maybe you could bring your chart to share.

## **Admitting When We Are Wrong Week 14**

Point to Emphasize: We should admit when we are wrong.

Reference Reading: Nehemiah 9

Memory Verse: So then each one of us will give an account concerning himself to God.  
(Romans 14:12)

### Story Sample

*[Review last week's lesson for one or two minutes, and ask the children how they used their time during the week.]*

The children of Israel spent one-fourth of their time reading God's Word, and they used one-fourth of their time confessing and worshipping God. Who can tell me what it means to confess? Yes, it means to admit when we are wrong. God's people confessed all that they had done wrong to God. When they heard the Word of God, they realized that many things they said and did were not good. They felt so sorry for their misbehavior and misspeaking, and they told God that they were sorry.

Just the other day, I had to confess I was wrong, too. I said something mean to my sister. After I said those mean words, I knew I was wrong, so I had to confess to my sister and apologize. I felt a little better after I did this, but I realized I also had to admit I was wrong to God. After I prayed, I felt even better. *[Use your own example.]*

As the people confessed, they felt so much better toward God. They worshipped Him! Confessing that they had been wrong made them appreciate how kind God had been to them even though they were doing evil things. These two things, confessing and worshipping, often go together. First we admit we are wrong, and then we appreciate God for being so faithful to us.

It always helps us feel better to confess that we said or did something wrong. Maybe you are having a bad day, and you said something mean to your mom. What can you say to her to confess?

## **Giving Thanks to God Week 15**

Point to Emphasize: We should always be thankful.

Reference Reading: Nehemiah 12:27-43

Memory Verse: I will give thanks to Jehovah...And I will sing psalms to the name of Jehovah the Most High. (Psalm 7:17)

### Story Sample

After the rebuilding of the wall of Jerusalem, there was a dedication of the wall. A dedication is a special ceremony to officially mark the completion of something special that has been built.

I was recently reading an article about the Empire State Building [*show picture*] and when they finished building it in 1931, they had an official dedication of the building. At that time it was the tallest skyscraper in the world, and like the wall of Jerusalem, it had been built in record time, so it was an important accomplishment. The President at that time was Herbert Hoover. They had a ceremony and President Hoover pushed a button and all the lights of the building came on at once. The building was officially opened, and all the people celebrated.

For the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem, they called all the Levites from all the places to come to Jerusalem. The city was filled with rejoicing and thanksgiving and singing with cymbals, harps, and lyres. Nehemiah gathered the leaders of Judah and appointed two groups to go in a procession, each way on the wall, giving thanks. Then the two companies that gave thanks met in the house of God. There was so much rejoicing and thanking that day.

Why do you think they were rejoicing and thanking? Do you think it was because they had done such a good job? No, it was because they knew God had done it. They were thanking God for all He had done to help them rebuild the wall. God caused them all to rejoice – even the women and the children were rejoicing. The Bible even says that “the joy of Jerusalem was heard from afar.”

I’m so glad that they did this! It’s important to be thankful for things. We need to thank God every day for what He has done. He gave us the best parents, a place to live, food to eat – so many things. So we should always remember to say “Thank You, God”.

*[Give a personal example of a time when you gave thanks for something, then lead the children into talking about ways they can give thanks.]*



## **Recognizing a Good Leader Week 16**

Point to Emphasize: We can learn to lead in the best way, and we should follow the good leaders.

Reference Reading: Nehemiah 13:30

Memory Verse: *But you have closely followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, long-suffering, love, endurance.* (2 Timothy 3:10)

### Story Sample

Today we come to the end of the book of Nehemiah. It was a very good story, wasn't it? It began with Nehemiah as a cupbearer to the king of Persia, where all the Jews had been taken in captivity. And do you remember why he was given the job of being a cupbearer? That's right, because he could be trusted.

This trustworthy man was used by God to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the wall and the city. He was the right one to lead the people in the work of rebuilding what the Babylonians had destroyed. God needed good leaders to accomplish what He wanted to do.

When my children were young, they went on a camping trip. The forest ranger was going to lead a hike to a lake nearby, so they divided all the children at the campsite into two groups: a younger group and an older group. They all started out together, with the ranger leading them, giving them information about the forest as they went. But the older children decided they weren't going fast enough. One of them said, "I can lead you to the lake all by myself." So, off they went. And you know what? That child wasn't a very good leader, so he got them all lost. They were miserable and they got to the lake an hour later than the other group who had a leader who knew the forest. *[Insert your story of being a good leader or recognizing and following a good leader.]*

Not everyone can be a good leader. But Nehemiah was! He set his heart to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the wall. He didn't just come up with an idea like the children on the campout, going off without a plan or any preparation. He had a plan of action to accomplish a difficult task. He took the steps that were needed to reach the goal. He made arrangements for materials, a plan for the people to build, and even a plan to keep them safe while they built. And the people followed his instructions. When he didn't know about something, he got someone who knew better to help him out. Remember how he called on Ezra, the scribe, to lead the people into knowing God's Word?

Because of Nehemiah's excellent leadership, the wall was completed. This is the kind of person I choose to follow.

Who will you follow? *[Finish by talking to the children about some of the leaders in their lives – their parents, teachers, young people, older ones in the church.]*