

## Bible background

Nehemiah 2:1-11

## Aim of lesson

To show that God answers prayers.

## Preparation required

Collect some building blocks; either Lego bricks or cardboard boxes can be used to build a small wall. You will also need colouring materials.

## Suggested outline of lesson

1. Explain that in this lesson we are going to learn about someone who wanted to build the walls of his city, Jerusalem, because they were all broken down, so we are going to practice building. Individually or in small groups, have the class build a wall.
2. Get the children to help you tell the story by doing the same actions. Have them hold up their forefinger as Nehemiah.

'Here is Nehemiah. He is very sad (bend finger slightly). He has a very nice job - he works in a palace - he serves wine to the king and queen (mime pouring and giving cup). However, he is still sad (bend finger). The palace is not his real home. He is just a servant there and his real home is a long way away in another country. His brother has just brought some bad news. (You could mime the brother coming with your other hand.) The city wall round their home town has been broken down and the gates burnt. (Break down building block wall.) Their beautiful city, Jerusalem, where they had worshipped God, was destroyed. No one worshipped God in this country. However, Nehemiah knew what to do when things were bad. He prayed to God.' (You could all mime by putting hands together.)

Ask the children what they think he said. Bring out the point that Nehemiah could not choose to go and build his city because he was the king's servant and so he prayed that the king would let him go to build the wall.

'After Nehemiah had prayed, he went as usual to serve the king some wine (mime) but the king noticed Nehemiah was sad and asked him why.'

Ask the children what Nehemiah replied.

'Now the king could have had Nehemiah's head chopped off for looking sad and not liking it in his palace, but he did not. He said Nehemiah could go with his friends and build the wall. The king gave him letters to take to the man in charge of the forest to let him have wood and the king sent some soldiers with him to guard him on the way.'

Ask the children to get on horses or donkeys and wave goodbye to the king and queen and gallop off to Jerusalem.

If space is very restricted, galloping can be done sitting down by holding reins and using feet.

3. Teach the song 'Off We Go To Jerusalem'.
4. Give out the activity sheets and discuss. Ask the children to colour and complete them.

## Alternative activities

1. Using circles of card or paper plates, draw or stick a sad face on one side and a happy face on the other. Attach a thin piece of dowel or a strip of very strong card so the children can hold them up and turn them round to show how Nehemiah felt at different times in the narrative.
2. Role-play. The children can take turns to be the king and queen with 'robes' (made from an old duvet cover, bath sheet or curtain) cardboard crowns and some 'jewels'. (Always supervise children carefully if they are putting things around their necks) The other children can be Nehemiah and the other servants and can bring in a plastic goblet of 'wine' and some trays of play food.
3. Sit in a circle and ask each child to tell you something they can pray about or where and how they can pray. Pass round a toy to help each child identify when it is their turn to speak or listen. It will probably be helpful if you start off with your own example.
4. Make a Prayer Wall. Give each child some brick shaped pieces of paper and either get them to draw pictures of things they can pray about/thank God for, or supply some suitable magazine pictures that can be stuck on to the bricks. All of the children's bricks can then be stuck on to a large piece of paper or card to build a wall.

## Relevance to the children's lives

Encourage the children to pray when they have difficulties.

## Prayer

Ask the children to pray when they have difficulties.

## Verse

'I call on you, O God, for you will answer me.' Psalm 17:6.

## Song

**Off we go to Jerusalem (Tune: Horsey, Horsey, Don't You Stop)**

- v.1    Off we go to Jerusalem  
         Off we go to Jerusalem  
         Off we go to Jerusalem  
         God will help us build it again.
- v.2    Nehemiah knew what to do  
         Nehemiah knew what to do  
         Nehemiah knew what to do  
         He prayed to God so why don't you.

*Music: Traditional.*