



Date: _____
Series: Aliens in a Strange Land
Fall Year 4, Lesson 27

Nehemiah Rebuilds Jerusalem

Take Home Point: *Build your life with prayer.

*Repeat this phrase throughout the lesson.

Bible Event: Nehemiah 1-15

Key Verse: Romans 12:12, "Be happy in your confidence, be patient in trouble, and pray continually."

We will help kids know:

- The Bible event of Nehemiah returning to Jerusalem to rebuild the city, noting especially how he prayed at significant steps along the way.
- They can build life with prayer as they build their life on Christ.
- We should give thanks to God who answers our prayers, even having a special time for thanksgiving.




We will help kids feel:

- Thankful for the ways God has answered prayers in the past and will in the future.
- Inspired and motivated to pray for the future building of their life.

We will help kids do:

- Discuss their excitement and future needs as they consider where life might take them.
- Build towers to symbolize building their life with prayer.

THIS LESSON'S ROADMAP

DESTINATION	PAGE #	DISCOVERIES ON YOUR JOURNEY	SUPPLIES NEEDED
Small Group Warm-Up 	3	Children discuss what they look forward to in their future.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • index cards (several per child) • pen
Large Group 	4 7 9 11	Overview Puppet Presentation: “Gordy Builds with Prayer”—Gordy looks at his future as he announces he wants to be an astronaut. Dramatic Interview: Nehemiah appears and tells his story with the help of a few items he brought in the transporter. Puppet Conclusion: “Gordy Builds with Prayer”—Gordy realizes as he looks at his future that he needs to build his life with prayer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gordy with aluminum foil on his head • transporter machine • suitcase with the following inside: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ cup ○ newspaper ○ crown ○ party favor blower or another item that shows mocking ○ spear or sword ○ calendar ○ branch • piece of poster board with cross drawn on it
Small Group Application 	4	Children build towers and take turns praying for each other as they discuss their future.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8.5x11 inch sheet of cardstock • index cards

Small Group Warm-Up: 15 minutes



Purpose: *Get pointed in the right direction! Build relationships and help guests feel at ease. Do the learning readiness activity that will point your group in the right direction for the lesson.*

Supplies: index cards, pen

Discuss the following questions and have kids write their answers using one card per question. For younger students, have them write one word (If they have trouble spelling tell them to just write what it sounds like, don't spend time helping to write the words correctly) or draw a symbol or picture to represent their idea.

What are your thoughts about becoming a ____ grader next year? Fill in next grade. What are you looking forward to as a ____ grader?

What do you think will be the best thing about going to middle school?

What do you think will be the best thing about becoming a teenager in high school?

What do you think will be the best thing about becoming an adult?

There are many wonderful things we can look forward to as we grow older. It is almost like each year we keep building on what God has already given us or done for us. The way we build our life can be demonstrated with these cards.

Have kids fold each of the four cards into 90-degree angles. Stand two cards closely together so that you can lay a third card flat on top to create level one. For level two, repeat the process to make a tower.

Our life is like this. We look forward to the new things that are coming up and we **build our life with prayer* and ask for God's help to lead us through each step. These cards remind us we can pray for each stage as we grow.

Large Group Overview: 20-30 minutes



Purpose: *Help kids observe what the Bible says. Present the Bible Event in creative fashion. Help kids begin to interpret what it means.*

Puppet Presentation: “Gordy Builds with Prayer” – Gordy looks at his future and announces he wants to be an astronaut.

Dramatic Interview: Nehemiah appears and tells his story with the help of a few items he brought in the transporter.

Puppet Conclusion: “Gordy Builds with Prayer”—Gordy realizes as he looks at his future that he needs to build his life with prayer.

Small Group Application: 20-25 minutes



Purpose: *Help kids map out the meaning of the Bible Event in their lives. Use the questions to stimulate discussion but don't feel tied to them. Allow the Holy Spirit to guide you. Include personal examples from your own faith journey. The example of Christ at work in your life will leave lasting impressions of how Christ can work in the children's lives.*

Use your Bibles! Children need to learn how to look up references and follow along when scripture is read aloud. Allow for quality time of prayer at the close of the lesson.

Observation Questions: What happened?

Have children refer to the book of Nehemiah in their Bibles.

What did Nehemiah's brother tell him that made him very sad? (*Nehemiah 1:3. The people in Jerusalem were in trouble. The walls had been broken down and the gates burned.*)

What did Nehemiah do when he heard this bad news? (*Nehemiah 1:4-11. He prayed.*)

How was Nehemiah's prayer, “Please give me success today and make this man, King Artaxerxes, show me compassion,” answered? (*Nehemiah 2. The king saw that Nehemiah was sad and had compassion on him. He allowed Nehemiah to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the wall. He also wrote letters to governors asking for Nehemiah's safe travel and to give him wood from the forest for rebuilding.*)

What obstacles did Nehemiah face in rebuilding the wall? (*Nehemiah 2:19, 4:1-3. Sanballat and Tobiah ridiculed and tried to intimidate the builders. They made plans to attack and kill the builders.*)

What did Nehemiah do when he heard these things? (*Nehemiah 4:4, 9, 13-21. He prayed and encouraged the people to fight if needed. He organized it so the people were always armed and ready to fight. Half of the people would be on guard while the other half continued to build the wall.*)

How long did it take to rebuild the wall? (*Nehemiah 6:15. It took only 52 days.*)

Interpretation Questions: What does this mean?

Why do you think Sanballat and Tobiah wanted to keep the Israelites from rebuilding the wall around Jerusalem? (*Without the wall, they were weak and easy to attack.*)

Why do you think the wall was rebuilt so quickly? (*Nehemiah's prayers and good leadership. God was on their side. See Nehemiah 4:20.*)

Describe Nehemiah. What was he like? (*Accept any answer. Focus their attention on the following references: Chapter 1:4 –sensitive to hurt of God's people; Chapter 1:3-8 –boldness to make requests to the king and queen; Chapter 1:17 –saw a problem and wanted to fix it; Chapter 1:20 and 4:4 –he could take teasing and “put downs” by looking to God for wisdom and direction; Chapter 4:14 –encouraged people; Chapter 4:21-23 –was a good planner and defender of God's work.*)

Application Questions: What does this mean to me?

Our key verse from Romans 12:12 says: “Be happy in your confidence, be patient in trouble, and pray continually.” How did Nehemiah follow this advice? (*He remained confident in his request from King Artaxerxes and patient when ridiculed. He prayed continually.*)

What can we learn from Nehemiah? (*Be bold, depend on God, seek God's face for wisdom and direction, encourage God's people, and defend the faith*)

How do you react when something happens, whether good or bad, to you? Do you ask for help or give thanks to God for helping you? Do you also pray for those around you? (*Take any answer and discuss.*)

Application Activity:

Supplies: note cards, 8.5x11 inch sheet of card stock

Hand each child two blank note cards. Draw a cross on the large piece of card stock.

Take your note cards and draw or write things you need to pray for in the future as your life is being built. It can be something happening next week or ten years from now.

Give children a few minutes to draw or write. Then start to build a tower on the piece of card stock with a cross. Have kids fold their cards into 90-degree angles like in the warm up activity. As each child places his/her card on the cross and shares, have another child put a flat card on top and pray for them. If there is extra time after each child has shared, repeat the process and create more cards and levels until time is up.

Closing prayer:

Pray that all would remember to be like Nehemiah and to pray continually for all things. Thank God that we can build our lives on Jesus, our firm foundation.

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Large Group Presentation: 20-30 minutes

Aliens In a Strange Land

This series covers the captivity in Babylon. Daniel and his friends were aliens in this strange land. Kids will discover that the word “alien” does not only mean “visitor from outer space,” but any person who is a foreigner from another land. Therefore, anyone who has faith in Christ is a citizen of heaven and an alien in this world. As a result, he or she doesn’t fit in with a sinful world. Many of the standards of this world are contrary to God’s kingdom.

Kids need to know that if they live their lives for Christ, they will receive pressure from the world to compromise their faith. But because they are citizens of God’s kingdom and foreigners, or aliens, to the ways of this world, they can trust God no matter what.

The metaphor of an alien will be used throughout the series. To help kids visualize this, construct an alien transporter machine from a cardboard refrigerator box or wall dividers. Use light, sound and spaceship decor. A child selected from the audience each week will appear from the machine and give an “alien’s perspective” on the lesson. Option: see picture.



The Bible Event will use the video “Animated Stories from the Bible: Daniel” produced by Animated Bible Stories II, 1993. Sections of this video will be shown in the first four lessons. If you choose not to use the video, it would be simple to introduce a costumed character to tell the story.

After the video is shown for each lesson, Gordy who is the alientologist and the expert of aliens, wants to understand how these aliens think. The Large Group presenter will bring up a child to go through the alien machine and come out to answer questions relevant to the topic of that day which describe us as foreigners in a sinful world in which we don’t fit. The Large Group presenter will help the child through some application questions that lead us to the Take Home Point for each lesson.

Supplies: transporter machine, foil wrapped around Gordy’s head, a suitcase, cup, newspaper, crown, party favor blower or another item used for mocking, spear or sword, two pages of a calendar, branch, piece of poster board with cross drawn on it.

Gordy Builds with Prayer

Puppet Presentation

Presenter: Kids, shall we welcome Gordy this morning?

Gordy enters wearing aluminum foil on his head.

Presenter: Gordy, what's the deal with the stuff on your head?

Gordy: I decided what I want to be when I grow up.

Presenter: Really? What's that?

Gordy: An alien!

Presenter: Is that what that stuff is on your head?

Gordy: Yeah! Do I look like an alien?

Presenter: Gordy, you can't be an alien.

Gordy: Wait a minute! You said these last weeks that we are all aliens here on earth.

Presenter: You are right. We are aliens because we are foreigners here. Our citizenship is in God's Kingdom, so we don't fit into the sinful thinking of this world. But I thought you were talking about an alien from another planet.

Gordy: No, I guess that's not possible, but I would like to be a space man. Check out the helmet.

Presenter: Oh, is that what that is?

Gordy: You kind of have to use your imagination.

Presenter: So, you want to be an astronaut? Why is that?

Gordy: Because when I am up in outer space, I won't have to do my homework.

Presenter: Gordy, if you want to be an astronaut, you have a lot of homework ahead of you.

Gordy: I guess you are right.

Presenter: But you could still do it. The future is building. You are in third grade now. You build on what you learn and you will be in fourth grade, then fifth grade, then sixth grade and so on.

Gordy: When does it ever stop?

Presenter: You continue building throughout your whole life. Today we will discover a very important secret to building your life.

Gordy: What's that?

Presenter: We should **build your life with prayer.*

Gordy: How do I do that?

Presenter: We will talk about it in a few minutes, but first let's learn from the Bible event how one man did it. He not only built his life with prayer but he built the walls of the city of Jerusalem with prayer.

Gordy: I thought Jerusalem was destroyed.

Presenter: You are right, Gordy. Several weeks ago we learned that Jerusalem was destroyed because the people worshiped idols. God allowed the Babylonian king to come and take the Israelites away. That is how they became aliens or foreigners in a strange land.

Gordy: That's right.

Presenter: Now we will find that God has brought them back through a man named Nehemiah. Prayer helped him not only build his life but also the city of Jerusalem.

Gordy: Do we get to watch a movie?

Presenter: No movie today. Instead, we get to hear from Nehemiah himself. Would you please welcome Nehemiah?

Nehemiah

Dramatic Interview

Nehemiah enters and walks through the operating alien transporter machine with a costume and a suitcase.

Gordy: Hey, what's he doing with a suitcase? They didn't have those back then!

Presenter: I don't know. Let's find out. Do you want to ask him?

Gordy: Nehemiah, what are you doing with that suitcase?

Nehemiah: *I picked this up through the transporter to help me carry my things. It's a long trip from Babylon to Jerusalem and then to Kingdom Quest. My arms were getting tired! Let me show you what I have in here and you can hear the whole story.*

Gordy: Okay!

Nehemiah sets his suitcase down and pulls out a cup.

Nehemiah: *My job was that of a cupbearer to Artaxerxes, the King of Persia. It was a demanding task but one that I enjoyed. I brought the king his favorite drinks and served him whenever he was thirsty. Everything was going pretty well until one day my brother came to visit and brought me this...*

Nehemiah pulls out a newspaper from the suitcase.

Nehemiah: *He brought me news of home and it was not good. He told me that our home city of Jerusalem was a mess and the walls of the city had never been fixed. Everyone there was very poor and scared because, without walls, it made it easy for enemies to attack them. I was very sad. I prayed for the people and God gave me the courage to ask the king if I could go back to Jerusalem to help my people. And so, you guessed it...*

Nehemiah pulls out a crown.

Nehemiah: *I went to the king. He noticed I was very sad and asked me what was wrong. God helped me say the right words, and what do you know? King Artaxerxes listened to me and even gave me letters to show other kings so they would let me pass through their countries quickly. I began my journey back to my home. When I got there, I saw how bad the wall was. I told the rulers how I had prayed and God answered me. They saw that and said they would help me rebuild. So we got started the next morning; but unfortunately some people did not like it and...*

Nehemiah pulls out the party blower.

Nehemiah: *There were two men named Sanballot and Tobiah that came by all the time to make fun of the people building the wall. They even tried to trick me once and I found out they were going to attack Jerusalem. So I told the men building to carry this...*

Nehemiah pulls out sword or spear.

Nehemiah: *I had them carry weapons in case we were attacked. Half of the people would be on guard while the other half continued to build the wall. I also prayed that the people would be safe. Sanballot and Tobiah found out about the swords and spears and did not attack us. Finally, we completed building the wall. It took us only 52 days!*

Nehemiah pulls out calendar pages and points out 52 days.

Nehemiah: *52 days is almost two months. That is pretty fast without fancy machines. So, what do you think we did when the wall was done? (Listen for audience responses.) That's right! We threw a party! This was not just any party, though. It was called the "Festival of Booths." It was also a time of thanksgiving to God for all he did for us. Ezra, the priest, helped me lead the people in prayer and praise. They all built booths with these...*

Nehemiah pulls out a branch.

Nehemiah: *The people lived in the booths for seven days and listened to the reading of God's law. It was so wonderful to see what God accomplished. That wall was completed through prayer. Thank you for letting me tell my story. I must get back and see how the people are doing. Goodbye.*

Nehemiah exits.

Gordy Builds with Prayer

Puppet Conclusion

Presenter: Gordy, what did you think of Nehemiah?

Gordy: He's cool and everything. I like the way he prayed all the time. It was cool how God answered him, too.

Presenter: That's true. God did take care of his people.

Gordy: But I've got a question. What does Nehemiah have to do with me?

Presenter: Just like Nehemiah built the wall with prayer, you can build your life with prayer.

Gordy: Does that mean I get a spear and everything?

Presenter: No, you won't need a spear. You aren't building with stones.

Gordy: How about Legos?

Presenter: No. You are building your life by growing into a fine young man who is becoming more and more like Jesus. You do that building with prayer.

Gordy: It sounds good, but I don't think I understand how my life is built.

Presenter: Let me give you an example. I need one volunteer who has a pretty big test coming up this week at school. I need another volunteer who has some kind of "owie," some type of injury or hurt. Last, I need a volunteer who has a friend in trouble.

Have volunteers come on stage. Lay the poster board with cross on the ground.

Presenter: God is building your life by helping you learn more and more. When you are worried or bothered about something, God wants you to pray about it. Go ahead and step on this piece of paper.

Kids step on paper.

This reminds you of the foundation of your building. Build your life on Jesus. Would each of you please tell us about what you said you were worried about?

Allow kids to share. (Mention to kid with friend in trouble not to say his/her name if he/she is in the room or do anything that might embarrass him/her.) After each one shares, briefly say a prayer over them. Have volunteers return to their seats when the prayer is done.

Presenter: Gordy, God wants to build character and care into our lives. These can be built every step of the way with prayer. All along the way we should also give thanks to God just as Nehemiah did with the people. Romans 12:12 says: *"Be happy in your confidence, be patient in trouble, and pray continually."*

Gordy: The most important thing I am grateful for is that God sent Jesus to die for me.

Presenter: Do you want to tell God that right now?

Gordy: I sure do. Dear God, I want to build my life with prayer, and I guess I am starting that right now. I am excited to get older and see everything you will do in my life. Most of all, thank you for sending Jesus so I can have eternal life. I love you. In Jesus' name, Amen.