

# REBUILDING THE WALLS

**Bible Basis:** Ezra 7:1, 7, 10–11; Nehemiah 1:2–6, 11; 4:4–6, 13–23; 8:1–12

**Key Verse:** Don't be afraid of your enemies. Remember the Lord. He is great and powerful.  
—Nehemiah 4:14 NIV

**Bible Point:** Nehemiah was sure of God's power. God is on my side.

**Resource:** *The Story for Children*, Chapter 21: "Rebuilding the Walls"

## STEP 1: COME TOGETHER

**Stuff You Need:** whiteboard or easel pad and markers, Optical Illusion Activity Sheet

**Optional:** Optical Illusion PowerPoint slide and projection equipment

If you're not using the Optical Illusion PowerPoint slide, draw lines like those on the "Optical Illusion" page where everyone can see them. While the arrow lines vary, the main lines should be the same length. (With a small class, you can just display the printed page.) As children gather, ask which line they think is the longest one. Then ask, "Are you sure?" or "How sure are you about that?" Reveal that the lines are all the same length. The direction of the arrow lines make us think the main lines are different lengths. Talk about:

- Tell me some things you are sure of. Then tell me some things you're not sure of.
- What makes you sure of some things and not sure about other things?

Say, **In the Bible story today, we'll meet Nehemiah and we'll find out what he was sure of.**

## STEP 2: HEAR THE STORY

**Stuff You Need:** copies of *The Story for Children*, Bibles, *The Story Elementary Trading Card 21*

Tell the story from *The Story for Children*, Chapter 21. You can also have children find Nehemiah 1 and mark it in their Bibles. Either you or a child in your class can read the Scripture passages listed throughout the story.

### NEHEMIAH IS SURE

As you tell the story, you'll pause as indicated and ask the same pair of questions each time: "Do you think ...?" "Are you sure?"

Nehemiah had a job that not many people had. He was the drink-tester for the king of Persia. But Nehemiah's heart was far away in Jerusalem. He wanted to go to Jerusalem and help rebuild the city. First he had to ask the king's permission to go.

Do you think the king will give permission? *Pause for responses.*

Are you sure? *Pause for responses.*

Nehemiah was sure that going to Jerusalem was the right thing to do, and the king agreed. When Nehemiah got to Jerusalem, he found everything was a big mess! The people were having a hard time. The wall around the city was still broken down, and the gates had been burned. Other people who lived in the area were making fun of God's people. No one seemed to be in charge. Not much was getting done.

Do you think Nehemiah is going to give up and go home to Persia?

Are you sure?

Nehemiah was sure he could help! He was going to get busy doing something about these problems. But first, he stopped to pray. *Read Nehemiah 1:5–6a.*

Do you think Nehemiah can get everybody to work?

Are you sure?

Nehemiah was sure they could get the job done if everyone worked together. Nehemiah got everybody organized to get to work. Everybody had a job to do, and they followed Nehemiah's leadership. The people worked with all their hearts and built up the wall until it was half as high as they wanted it to be. But the problems were still there. Other people living in that area still wanted God's people to stop building the wall. They still did everything they could to cause problems and get in the way.

Do you think Nehemiah has a plan to solve this problem?

Are you sure?

Nehemiah was sure God wanted them to build that wall. He assigned the families to work on the wall, but he told them to keep their swords and spears close to them. *Read Nehemiah 4:14.*

Do you think the people were encouraged by this?

Are you sure?

Nehemiah was sure. *Read Nehemiah 4:16–17.*

Do you think the wall will get built all the way up?

Are you sure?

Nehemiah was sure. At long last, the wall was finished, and it was time for celebration. Jerusalem, God's holy city, finally had a wall to protect it. And to celebrate, the people gathered to worship. Ezra, the priest, stood before all the people and read from the law of God from sunrise until lunch time. Everyone listened carefully, and when he was finished, they bowed down and worshiped the Lord.

Do you think Nehemiah is happy about this?

Are you sure?

Nehemiah was sure that this was the right thing to do. He said to the people, "This day is set apart to honor the Lord your God. Don't be sad. The joy of the Lord makes you strong." Then all the people went off to eat and drink and celebrate.

Do you think Nehemiah got the job done?

Are you sure?

Nehemiah was sure of God's power. He knew no matter what the enemies tried to do, God was still more powerful. God was on the side of his people, and he's on your side, too!

After you have told the Bible story, give each child a copy of *The Story Elementary Trading Card 21*. Ask children to look at the picture and tell you about how Nehemiah was sure of God's power. As a class, read the key verse from the back of the card or from the Bible. Ask:

- Why do you think Nehemiah was so sure of God's power?
- How did Nehemiah handle the things that happened that could have made him not so sure?

Say, **The next time you feel alone, remember that God is on your side.**

Collect the cards for now. You'll send them home with the children later.

### STEP 3: EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help your class explore the lesson further.

#### OPTION 1: SHAPE ART

**Stuff You Need:** Shape Templates Activity Sheet, safety scissors, glue, markers, construction paper  
Optional: poster board

Give an activity sheet to each child. Say, **Our story was about God's people building a new wall around the city of Jerusalem. Let's make a picture of what happened in the story by using only certain shapes.** You can have children work individually on construction paper or cooperatively on a

poster board. Cut out the template shapes and have children use these as guides to make as many shapes as they want. Then arrange the shapes to make a picture of people building the wall. As children work, ask:

- How does Nehemiah's example help you in your life?
- Why can you be sure that God is on your side?

Say, **Nehemiah was sure of God's power and knew God was on the side of his people. God is on your side, too!**

### **OPTION 2: Yes, I'm Sure Song**

Say, **Nehemiah was sure of God's power. We can also be sure of God's power and that he is always on our side. Write a song about how God is on our side.** Allow children to work together to write a song about God being on our side. Children may find it easier to write a verse to the tune of one they already know.

### **OPTION 3: GOD IS ON HIS SIDE**

**Stuff You Need:** God is on His Side Activity Sheet, crayons

Give an activity sheet to each child. Talk to the group about how it feels to know that there is someone always supporting you. Say, **Do you think that Nehemiah felt this same way? Color this picture of Nehemiah.**

### **OPTION 4: NEHEMIAH BUILDING WALLS**

**Stuff You Need:** small boxes (depending on how big you want your bricks, milk cartons and shoe boxes work well), glue, paintbrushes, yellow, gray, or beige washable paint, sand

**Optional:** tarp

1. Cover box with glue. You can use a paintbrush or let kids use their hands to help spread glue over the entire surface.
2. Coat heavily with sand.
3. Gently shake off the excess.
4. Let dry.
5. When dry, paint over the sand.
6. Let dry.

## **STEP 4: GOING HOME**

Pray together thanking God for always being on our side. Make sure each child takes home a copy of *The Story Elementary Trading Card 21*, Activity Sheet(s)/Crafts, and the Parents' Page.