



SEPTEMBER THEME

**DIRTY JOBS**  
Somebody's Gotta Do it

**BIBLE STORY**

**Nehemiah 2:19-20; 4; 6**

He Came in Like a Wrecking Ball |  
Nehemiah and Sanballat

**BOTTOM LINE**

Stay focused on what needs to be  
done

**MEMORY VERSE**

"Work at everything you do with  
all your heart. Work as if you were  
working for the Lord."  
Colossians 3:23a, NIV

**LIFE APP**

**Initiative** | Seeing what needs to be  
done and doing it

**BASIC TRUTH**

I need to make the wise choice, and  
with God's help...I can!

**FOR LEADERS ONLY**

**GOD VIEW:** the connection between **INITIATIVE** and God's character, as shown through God's big story.

**THIS WEEK—Key Question: What distracts you from doing what needs to be done?**

We've all started projects that end up unfinished because we were distracted by something else that was happening. We want families to start thinking about some of those distractions. Some might be out of their control, but for the ones they can control, we hope they can leave with a plan to ignore those distractions and get their jobs done.

In week four, we see how Nehemiah dealt with some distractions in **Nehemiah 2:19-20, 4, and 6**. Not everyone liked what Nehemiah was doing. He had enemies who tried to distract the people from finishing the wall. But he saw through their plan and stayed focused on the job God gave him to finish.

**Bottom Line: Stay focused on what needs to be done.** From cleaning our rooms to finishing homework to yardwork to work projects, we have all sorts of things that need to be done. But it often doesn't take long for cleaning a room to become playing with the toys you're supposed to be picking up or home projects to sit idle while we seek more motivation. We hope families will see that focusing on the task at hand is important. God has all sorts of jobs for us to do. We can trust God to give us the focus we need to finish them.

**SOCIAL: PROVIDING TIME FOR FUN INTERACTION**

Welcome kids and spend time engaging in conversation and catching up. Get ready to experience today's story.

Before kids arrive, **PRAY** for each group member by name. At this phase, most kids will have a hard time recognizing when they're being distracted, so pray for God to give them that self-awareness. Also pray that God would protect kids from distractions so they can do what needs to be done.

•• **EARLY ARRIVER IDEA**

**Made to Connect** | An activity that invites kids to share with others and build on their understanding

**What You Need:** "Stay Focused" activity sheet, crayons

**What You Do:**

- Greet the kids as they arrive.
- Hand out the "Stay Focused" activity sheet and crayons
- Explain to the kids that they should work on coloring the picture, BUT they need to



stay focused and color each row of bricks a different color. Then, invite them to color in Nehemiah's name, focusing on coloring each letter a different color.

**What You Say:** "Wow! You guys sure did a great job coloring your pictures! It was kind of hard to make sure we didn't repeat a color, wasn't it? Sometimes we really need to focus and pay attention to what we're doing, don't we? That's exactly what we're talking about today...we're going to continue with our story about Nehemiah and we're going to learn from him how it's important to **[BOTTOM LINE] stay focused on what needs to be done.**

### •• DISTRACTIONS

*Made to Play | An activity that encourages learning through following guidelines and working as a group*

**What You Need:** 10 plastic cups

#### **What You Do:**

- Divide kids into two teams.
- Assign one team "right side up" and the other team "upside down."
- Find a wide open space to play this game.
- Set the cups throughout the space with half "right side up" and half "upside down."
- Tell kids to flip the cups as fast as they can to their team's direction.
- Kids cannot touch or run into each other on purpose while flipping cups.
- Stop the game at a random time.
- When the game ends, whichever team has the most cups in their direction is the winner.
- Play again. Continue as long as time and interest allow.

**What You Say:** "In this game, you wanted to get all the cups in one direction. As you were trying to get this done, the other team was distracting you by turning them in the other direction. That made it hard to get your job done. All month long, we've been learning about how Nehemiah rebuilt the walls around Jerusalem. **[Transition] Nehemiah faced some distractions too. Today in Sunday CM worship/WOW family worship we'll find out/we found out what happened.**"

*[Sunday Leaders: Lead your group to the Family Room for Children's Ministry worship. Wednesday Leaders: Continue with the study.]*

---

## GROUPS: CREATING A SAFE PLACE TO CONNECT

Create a safe place to connect and learn how the Bible story applies to real life experiences, through interactive activities and discussion questions.

### •• NEHEMIAH STAYS FOCUSED [Talk about God | Bible Story Review]

*Made to Imagine | An activity that promotes empathy and facilitates biblical application through role-play and reenactment*

**What You Need:** No supplies needed

#### **What You Do:**

You narrate today's Bible story while your small group helps to tell the story. Instruct them to cheer every time you give a thumbs up, to boo every time you give a thumbs down, and to make praying hands every time they hear the word "pray."

**What You Say:** "All month long we've been learning about Nehemiah and how he traveled a long, long way to help rebuild the wall in



Jerusalem. It hasn't been easy, but the wall is close to being done! (*thumbs up = kids cheer*) BUT, now there's some trouble. (*thumbs down = kids boo*) Some people really don't want the wall to be finished, so they're trying to get in the way. But Nehemiah knows just what to do...he turns to God and PRAYS (*kids make praying hands*) and God is faithful every step of the way (*thumbs up = kids cheer*).

Now, in today's part of the story we meet a man named Sanballat. And do you remember what he did? He stood around and heckled the builders. That means he made fun of them and said some not so nice things to them. (*thumbs down = kids boo*) That's right...not too nice, was it? But Nehemiah kept his focus on the job he needed to do, turned to God and PRAYED (*kids make praying hands*) and God heard him. (*thumbs up = kids cheer*)

But Sanballat and his friends weren't done. They continued to try to distract Nehemiah and the builders and kept trying to get in the way of the wall being finished (*thumbs down = kids boo*). But the good news is, no matter what those guys did...no matter how many times they tried to get in the way...Nehemiah **[Bottom Line] stayed focused on what needed to be done** and kept PRAYING (*kids make praying hands*) to God and God gave him lots of wisdom to know how to get the job done. And guess what? They did it! (*thumbs up = kids cheer*) They finished the wall and Jerusalem was safe again! (*thumbs up = kids cheer*)

**What You Say:** "Wow! Thanks so much for helping me tell the story! Take a bow! Awesome job. You know, I read this story and think, 'How did Nehemiah do it?' Rebuilding the wall was a really big job! Then you've got those guys who just kept trying to interrupt all their work. But Nehemiah knew the job he was doing was VERY important and he refused to come down from the wall until it was done. This is a good lesson for us too. We need to **[Bottom Line] stay focused on what needs to be done** so we can finish what we start!"

●● **I'LL DO IT COUPON BOOKS** [Live for God | Application Activity]

**Made to Create | An activity that explores spiritual ideas through the process of drawing, building, and designing**

**What You Need:** "Coupon Book" cards, "Note to Parents" cards, crayons, pen, staplers (*on leader bin cabinet to share*)

**What You Do:**

- Pass out one of each of the seven "Coupon Book" cards to each child to color.
- As the kids are coloring their cards, read each coupon and talk about each job.
- Encourage the children to draw an additional task of their choice on the blank coupon.
- Explain that they will take these coupon books home and give them to an adult.
- The adult will choose when to "redeem" the coupon. (*That means they will tear it out and hand it to the child and the child must complete that task without getting distracted.*)
- When kids are done coloring/drawing, help them assemble the book with the cover on top (*the coupons themselves can be in random order*) and staple along the edge.
- Write Jess Olson's email address ([jolson@popmn.org](mailto:jolson@popmn.org)) on the parent note and be prepared to hand those out as adults arrive to pick up.

**What You Say:** "I want you to give these books to your mom, dad, grandma, or any other adult in your house who would like for you to do some extra chores. I'll send this note home that explains how to use them. When you're handed a coupon this week, I want you to complete the task with initiative! And don't let yourself get distracted. A distraction is anything that can pull you away from the job right in front of you, like when the TV is on while you're trying to read a book with your big sister, or the dog keeps sticking her head in the dishwasher when you're trying to put away the dishes. Let's try to **[Bottom Line] stay focused on what needs to be done** so we can complete each one! Do you think you can do it?"

●● **SAY IT WITH FOCUS** [Hear from God | Memory Verse Activity]

**Made to Play | An activity that encourages learning through following guidelines and working as a group**

**What You Need:** No supplies needed

