

9

Giving God the Credit

Service
We reveal God's love by serving.

POWER TEXT

"Give praise to the Lord, proclaim his name; make known among the nations what he has done. Sing to him, sing praise to him; tell of all his wonderful acts" (1 Chronicles 16:8, 9).

KEY REFERENCES

- Nehemiah 9; 13:1-22
- *Prophets and Kings,* chap. 56, pp. 661-668
- *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 6, pp. 125-128
- student story on page 102 of this guide.

OUR BELIEFS

- No. 22, Christian Behavior
- No. 17, Spiritual Gifts and Ministries
- No. 12, The Church

OBJECTIVES

The students will:

- **Know** that they serve God by telling of God's goodness to His people.
- **Feel** grateful for God's faithfulness and mercy.
- **Respond** by choosing to tell others what God has done for them.



We serve God when we tell others what He has done for us.

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

The Israelites confess their sins and renew their covenant to serve the Lord. Under the guidance of Nehemiah, reforms are made to help the people share God's love to others through their service.

This is a lesson about service.

Nehemiah knew that the best way he could serve those around him was to remind them of how faithful God had always been. People today need the same reminder. We are being God's servants when we continue to tell those around us of His leading in His church and in our own lives.

Teacher Enrichment

"As the people prostrated themselves before the Lord, confessing their sins and pleading for pardon, their leaders encouraged them to believe that God, according to His promise, heard their prayers. They must not only mourn and weep, and repent, but they must believe that God pardoned them. They must show their faith by recounting His mercies and praising Him for His goodness. . . .

"The song of praise ended, the leaders of the congregation related the history of Israel, showing how great had been God's goodness toward them, and how great their ingratitude. Then the whole congregation entered into a covenant to keep all the commandments of God" (*Prophets and Kings,* pp. 665, 666).

How much of my day is spent praising God? How many things can I think of that He has faithfully provided for me? How will my day progress as I praise Him for all He has done? How will this attitude make me a better servant to those around me?

Welcome

Welcome students at the door and direct them to their seats. Ask them how their week has been. Encourage learners to study their Sabbath School lesson regularly, and use several minutes to debrief students on the previous week's lesson.

Ask: **What was the most interesting part of the Bible story? What activity did you find the most helpful? Which activity was the most fun?** Invite students to share their experiences and/or the handiworks they created for Sabbath School during the week. (The leader should be familiar with the previous lesson to be able to direct the discussion.) This is also a good time to have students recite the power text.

Have students begin the readiness activity of your choice. 

Program notes

LESSON SECTION	MINUTES	ACTIVITIES	MATERIALS NEEDED
Welcome	Ongoing	Greet students at door. Ask about their week.	
1 Readiness	10-15	*A. Gratitude Race* *B. Taste Test* *C. Friendship Circle*	poster board, pens/markers food from a different culture or that looks unappetizing and unrecognizable (optional: disposable eating utensils, paper plates or bowls, napkins)
* Prayer and Praise	15-20	See page 97. Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.	songbooks, serving hands offering device, world map, pushpins
2 Bible Lesson	15-20	Introducing the Bible Story Experiencing the Story Exploring the Bible	 Bible costume, guest, slips of papers with questions for Nehemiah from Nehemiah 9; 13:1-22 Bibles, white/chalkboard, markers/chalk
3 Applying the Lesson	10-15	*Honor Roll*	*The SDA Hymnal* or recording of the song "My Tribute" by Andraé Crouch
4 Sharing the Lesson	10-15	*Web of Praise*	ball of yarn or string
* Closing		A. Prayer and Closing Comments B. Reminder to Parents C. Coming Up Next Week	

1

READINESS ACTIVITIES

Select the activity or activities that are most appropriate for your situation.

A

YOU NEED:
- ☐ poster board
- ☐ pens/markers

Gratitude Race

Divide into teams of three to five students. Provide each team with a poster board and a marker. Allow three minutes for each team to list all the things God has done for them for which they are grateful.

Debriefing

Say: **Let's say together the power text found in 1 Chronicles 16:8, 9:**

"Give praise to the Lord, proclaim his name; make known among the nations what he has done. Sing to him, sing praise to him; tell of all his wonderful acts" (1 Chronicles 16:8, 9).

Ask: **What part of 1 Chronicles 16:8, 9 did we fulfill when we wrote our responses?** (giving thanks, making known what He has done, praising, telling of His acts) Post all the lists around the room. Ask: **Why does God want us to "make known" what He has done?** (So we will remember to depend on God; so others will have faith in Him; so our faith will grow, etc.)

Say: **When you have a chance to tell what God has done, remember today's power point:**

We serve God when we tell others what He has done for us.

Accommodations for students with special needs: Give students who have learning disabilities the option to provide the answers while someone else from their team records the answers.

B

YOU NEED:
- ☐ Food from a different culture or that looks unappetizing and unrecognizable
- ☐ (Optional: disposable eating utensils, paper plates or bowls, napkins)

Taste Test

Notice to Teachers—Allergies: For this activity, be aware of food allergies that students may have, and choose only food items that all students could eat.

Set out the food. Make up a name for the food (such as "Food of Paradise") and describe with great enthusiasm the food's nutritional qualities. Name the ingredients in it and tell what vitamins they supply. Then put out some forks and paper plates and invite the students to come up and do a taste test.

Beforehand, arrange for someone who is popular with them to come, taste the food, and then convince everyone that: (1) he or she knows the cook; (2) the cook has a great reputation; (3) the dish is really delicious. He or she then puts a little of the food on the forks and distributes them. (But don't force anyone to eat it.)

Debriefing

Ask: **How do you feel about trying new foods?** (OK; don't like to; love new foods.) **Why do people sometimes not want to try new food?** (They are afraid it might taste bad; they don't know who cooked it; they aren't hungry; etc.) **Does it make a difference when someone you admire tells you that food tastes good?** (Usually we will try stuff that everyone else likes.) **Let's say together the power text found in 1 Chronicles 16:8, 9:**

"Give praise to the Lord, proclaim his name; make known among the nations what he has done. Sing to him, sing praise to him; tell of all his wonderful acts" (1 Chronicles 16:8, 9).

Ask: **What does this text have to do with what we learned from the taste test?** (People are sometimes afraid of God, but if they know you, they listen and might give God a chance, etc.) **What can you say about God that people might listen to?** (Tell of His answers to your prayers; how His Word guides you; how you came to know God forgives you, etc.) Say: **Our power point this week is:**

We serve God when we tell others what He has done for us.

Prayer and Praise

C

Friendship Circle

Have the students and helpers sit in a circle. Tell what you like about the person sitting to your right and how that person reminds you of God. For example, say: **"Carmelita is always quick to smile. She reminds me that God is our friend."** Carmelita then tells what she likes about the person to her right and how the person reminds her of God. (Large group: divide into circles of 12-15 students.)

Debriefing

Let's say together the power text found in 1 Chronicles 16:8, 9:

"Give praise to the Lord, proclaim his name; make known among the nations what he has done. Sing to him, sing praise to him; tell of all his wonderful acts" (1 Chronicles 16:8, 9).

Ask: **What different ways can we "tell of all [God's] wonderful acts"?** (The students can refer back to things that were said in the circle, such as by our obedience, cheerfulness, humility, and readiness to give God the credit when we are complimented.)

Say: **We share God's love and**

We serve God when we tell others what He has done for us.

Fellowship

Report the students' joys and sorrows (pleased and troubled) as reported to you at the door (as appropriate). If they have given you permission, share one or two special items from students' Bible study during the week. Acknowledge any birthdays, special events, or achievements. Give a special, warm greeting to all visitors.

Suggested Songs

"Make Me a Servant" (*He Is Our Song,* no. 126)
"Unto Thee, O Lord" (*He Is Our Song,* no. 102)
"To God Be the Glory" (*He Is Our Song,* no. 341)

Mission

YOU NEED:
- ☐ world map
- ☐ pushpins

Use Adventist *Mission* for youth and adults (go to www.juniorpowerpoints.org and click on MISSION) or another mission report available to you. For the mission story, have a map of the world where the students can identify the location of the mission story and compare it to where they are. You could use pushpins to mark where the mission story takes place.

Offering

YOU NEED:
- ☐ serving hands offering device

Say: **When we give our offerings in Sabbath School, the money is sent to help the mission work all over the world. Even when you cannot go to faraway places to tell others what God has done for you, you can send your offerings so that missionaries can use your money to do just that.**

Prayer

Ask the students to kneel in pairs. Ask: **Have you ever thought that we can show God's love and serve Him through our prayers—especially as we praise Him? Praising God is like thanking Him and complimenting Him. So let's tell God those things He does well.** Begin the prayer with your praise and then say: **And now we can all add our words of praise.** When their responses slow, continue with the rest of your prayer.

*Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.

2

BIBLE LESSON

Introducing the Bible Story

Ask: **Have you ever noticed what happens to your attitude if you constantly complain?** (Pretty soon you feel discouraged.) **What about when you try to dwell on something positive? In today's story, Nehemiah knew that the people were so self-absorbed that they had forgotten all the wonderful things God had done for them. Let's find out how he helped them to remember.**

Experiencing the Story

YOU NEED:

- ☐ Bible costume
- ☐ guest
- ☐ slips of paper with questions from Nehemiah 9; 13:1-22

Invite the adult who played Nehemiah to return and recount the final chapter of this story. Ask him to be sure to be expressive and excited about the people turning back to God. Provide the following questions (written on pieces of paper) for the students to ask Nehemiah at the close of the story. Provide the questions to "Nehemiah" beforehand for preparation.

1. Did you ever feel angry with the people?
2. What was the difference before and after they turned back to God?
3. Was it hard to get them focused on God after all those years?
4. How did they feel after they began to praise God for all He had done for them?
5. What happened soon after you returned to Babylon? (Read Nehemiah 13.)
6. What five reforms or "housecleaning" jobs did you make after returning from Babylon?
7. Why did you act against Tobiah the way you did (verses 8, 9)?
8. Why did you rebuke or scold the people for marriages with foreigners?

Debriefing

Ask: **What do you think might have happened to Jerusalem at that time if Nehemiah had not led the people as he did? How did God use Nehemiah to serve the people of Jerusalem?**

Say: **Remember our power point:**

We serve God when we tell others what He has done for us.

3

APPLYING THE LESSON

YOU NEED:
- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ white/chalkboard
- ☐ markers/chalk

Exploring the Bible

In the prayer recorded in Nehemiah 9, God's grace and power are remembered. Before Sabbath School class, write on the board the following list of questions and Bible references. Have volunteers read parts of the prayer in verses as follows.

Ask: **What blessing do we get from remembering God's power**

- **at creation?** (Verse 6: We have confidence in Him because He made us.)
- **with Abraham?** (Verses 7, 8: He made a promise to save Abraham's offspring.)
- **in Egypt?** (Verses 9, 10: He had power to bring Israel out and save them.)
- **in the Exodus?** (Verses 11, 12: He brought them through safely; He was patient with them.)
- **at Mount Sinai?** (Verses 13, 14: He gave laws to bring happiness, prosperity; He reminded them of the gift of Sabbath.)

Debriefing

Ask: **How was the prayer in Nehemiah 9 an act of serving God?** (It lifted the people's hearts to God, gave them confidence in Him; reminded them to serve Him; brought them back to Him.)

Accommodations for students with special needs: Students with impaired vision or with learning disabilities will benefit from having the list of questions and texts in front of them. Allow these students to sit near the board or prepare for them in advance handouts with the above list of questions and texts.

YOU NEED:
- ☐ *The SDA Hymnal* OR recording of "My Tribute," by Andraé Crouch

Honor Roll

Say: **In many schools students who work hard and do extra well at their studies have their names listed on the honor roll.**

Ask: **Does your school have an honor roll? Would you like to have your names on the honor roll?**

Say: **Dalinda wanted to get the top mark in history. She wanted to hear her name called at graduation; she wanted to earn the history medal. At the beginning of the year Dalinda studied her history every night. But after a few weeks she found herself busy with other things that had to be done right away. And so she started putting off her history homework. She forgot about the history medal until one day her mother reminded her. "You can earn that medal if you keep working on it," Dalinda's mother said. Dalinda started making up for lost time. She would not have taken the history honors if it had not been for her mother.**

Ask: **What honors have you earned that really belong to your parents? What compliments do you get that really belong to God?**

Debriefing

With your students, sing the refrain of "To God Be the Glory" (*The SDA Hymnal,* no. 341) or play a recording of "My Tribute," by Andraé Crouch, if available.

Ask: **What can you say to give God the glory when you are complimented about:**

- **the color of your hair?**
- **the whiteness of your teeth?**
- **the purity of your singing voice?**
- **the number of high marks on your report card?**
- **the way you pray in public?**
- **your choice to follow Jesus?**

Say: **When we acknowledge who we are and the gifts and talents God gave us, we are honoring Him, the giver of all our good gifts. Giving God the credit reminds us that whenever we do right and succeed it's not just our own doing but God working in us. Remember, this brings glory to God and helps others decide to trust Him with their gifts and abilities.**

We serve God when we tell others what He has done for us.

4

SHARING THE LESSON

YOU NEED:
- ☐ ball of yarn OR string

Web of Praise

Ask the students to stand and form a circle. Give a ball of yarn or string to a student and ask that student to say his or her name and then tell one good or happy thing that God has done this past week. That student then holds the end of the yarn and throws the ball to someone else. The second person does the same thing, holding the yarn and then throwing the ball to someone else. This continues until a web is formed. Draw attention to the beautiful web and then ask two or three to let go of their threads.

Debriefing

Ask: **What happened when some let go of the yarn?** (There was no more beautiful web.) **What happens when we think of all the good things that God has done for us?** (It keeps us connected to Him, makes a beautiful pattern.) **How does it make us feel about God?** (We love Him more.) **What does it do for us?** (Like our web, when we think of good things it creates something beautiful in our lives.) **How does our praising God help to serve others?** (It allows them to share in that beauty.) **What is our power point this week?**

We serve God when we tell others what He has done for us.

Closing

Prayer and closing comments:

Pray that like Nehemiah we may always stay close to God to know His will for our lives. Ask God to provide each student with the wisdom and courage to help people around them understand how to remain faithful to God.

Reminder to parents:

Say: **Check out the student Bible study guide to find Parents' Pages for your use in family worship, or however you wish to use them to spiritually guide your children. You may listen to the podcast of the lesson online at www.juniorpowerpoints.org/podcast.php?channel=1.**

Coming up next week:

Say: **An angel speaks to Mary. God chooses Mary to bear Jesus.**

Notes

Student lesson

Giving God the Credit

Imagine yourself being selected to serve as an elder in your local church. How would you handle church members who are not willing to serve God? Let's find out how "Elder" Nehemiah handled the problems he faced.

24th day of Elul, Year 20, Jerusalem

The wall is finished. The feasting and celebrating are over. Today we thought about more solemn things. As is our custom, we fasted, wore rough clothes, and put dust on our heads. We listened to the teaching from the Book of the Law, then we confessed our sins. This took half the day. We worshipped and praised God for the rest of the day.

The Levites shared a wonderful prayer that told how God has blessed us from the beginning. They talked about how God had led Abraham out of Ur; how our ancestors suffered in Egypt and how God led them out through the divided sea; how He led them by a pillar of cloud by day and fire by night; how He gave the law to them, fed them with manna, gave them water, and their clothes and shoes did not wear out during the 40 years of their wandering in the desert. Then he led them into the Promised Land.

They also shared the sad report about how our ancestors disobeyed God in spite of all He had done for them and how they were taken captive again. They talked about how good, patient, merciful, and kind God has been in dealing with our ancestors' disobedience—and with our own disobedience today. My heart rejoiced thinking about the Lord's goodness.

Year 32 (12 years later)

My work here is done. Being governor of Judah for these past 12 years has been very satisfying. I never took anything for my work—not a piece of silver, not a morsel of food. The people have settled into their lives here. They understand and obey the law. The priests are doing their jobs. I'll be returning to Persia and King Artaxerxes.

Sometime later, Susa, Persia

I've been fasting and praying for Judah, because I've heard of terrible things happening there. I've asked the king to let me return to Jerusalem.

Jerusalem

I can't believe what has happened while I've been gone! Eliashib, the high priest, let someone in his family marry one of Tobiah's relatives. Imagine—Tobiah, our worst enemy—the person who gave us so many problems when we were rebuilding the wall! God told Moses long ago that Tobiah's people shouldn't even be allowed near us!

That's not the worst: Eliashib gave him a room in the Temple! And not just any room, but the room for the tithes and offerings that belong to the Levites, musicians, and gatekeepers.

I was very upset about this. I threw out all of Tobiah's things and ordered the rooms to be purified. Next I brought back the things that belonged there, such as the grain offerings and the incense.

Then I found out that the Levites and musicians had gone back to farming because the people weren't supporting them. So I went and brought back the Levites and musicians.

Then the people brought their tithes, and I put them in the storerooms. I put the priest Shelemiah, the teacher Zadok, and the Levite Pedaiah in charge. Hanan, Zaccur's son, will assist them. They are honest men. I know they can be trusted to do their work well.

To my great disappointment I saw people working on the Sabbath! They were making wine, loading grain on donkeys, and bringing grain, wine, grapes, figs, and fish to sell.

So I asked the rulers, "What is this wicked thing you are doing—desecrating the Sabbath day? Didn't your ancestors do the same things, so that our God brought all this calamity on us and on this city?" I couldn't believe they hadn't learned their lesson!

So I ordered that the city gates be closed from before sunset on Friday until the Sabbath ended. I even put my servants at the gates. Once or twice a few merchants spent the night outside Jerusalem. I warned them that if they did it again, they would never trade in the city on any day of the week! After that they never came back on Sabbath.

Then I ordered the Levites to purify themselves and guard the city gates to make sure the Sabbath was kept holy. None of this was easy, but it had to be done. I had to remind the people to live God's way. I think everyone is on the right path again. Thank God for His patience and mercy toward Israel.

KEY REFERENCES

- Nehemiah 9; 13:1-22
- *Prophets and Kings*, chap. 56, pp. 661-668
- *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 6, pp. 125-128
- Our Beliefs, nos. 22, 17, 12

POWER TEXT

"Give praise to the Lord, proclaim his name; make known among the nations what he has done. Sing to him, sing praise to him; tell of all his wonderful acts" (1 Chronicles 16:8, 9).

POWER POINT

We serve God when we tell others what He has done for us.







Sabbath

DO Do this week's activity on page 74.

Sunday

LIST Each day this week, begin worship by listing the top five things for which you want to praise God.

READ Read 1 Chronicles 16:8, 9 and this week's story, "Giving God the Credit."

LEARN Begin to memorize the power text, 1 Chronicles 16:8, 9.

PRAY Ask God to help you understand how He has worked in your life so that you can tell others about it.

Monday

READ Read Nehemiah 9:1–8.

LIST In your Bible study journal, list your top five things for which you wish to praise God.

SHARE Share them with someone else.

PRAY Thank God and praise Him for His goodness and the many blessings He pours out in your life.

Tuesday

READ Read Nehemiah 9:9–21.

REFLECT What great things has God done in your life?

LIST In your Bible study journal, list five things for which you want to praise God today.

PRAY Ask God for the courage to share Him as you serve others.

Wednesday

READ Read Nehemiah 9:22–27.

FIND Skim Nehemiah 13 and identify two or three ways in which the Israelites shared God's gifts with others.

LIST In your Bible study journal, list five ways you could share with others the blessings for which you are praising God.

PRAY Ask God to show you ways to serve and share.

Thursday

READ Read Nehemiah 9:28–33.

REFLECT Why did God abandon the children of Israel in the hands of their enemies? Why is it important to live in harmony with God's will?

LIST List five of God's blessings that prompt you to praise Him. Do some acts of kindness for others that will inspire them to praise God.

PRAY Thank God for His provisions.

Friday

READ Read Nehemiah 9:34–38.

SING With your family, sing a praise song to God.

REVIEW Go over the list of top five praise items you've been creating each day.

LIST Together, spend five minutes listing all the wonderful things God has done for your family.

PRAY Take turns praising God for His goodness by thanking Him in prayer for all that He has done for your family.