

YEAR C | QUARTER 4

8

God's Fight

Service
We reveal God's love by serving.

POWER TEXT

"When our enemies heard that we were aware of their plot and that God had frustrated it, we all returned to the wall, each to our own work" (Nehemiah 4:15).

KEY REFERENCES

- Nehemiah 4; 5
- *Prophets and Kings,* chap. 53, pp. 641-645
- *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 6, pp. 115-120
- student story on page 92 of this guide.

OUR BELIEFS

- No. 8, The Great Controversy
- No. 11, Growing in Christ
- No. 10, The Experience of Salvation

OBJECTIVES

The students will:

- **Know** that God will equip them to face and overcome challenges to their service.
- **Feel** strengthened by God to face conflicts.
- **Respond** by relying on God's strength when facing conflicts and challenges.



We can rely on God's strength to use us to serve.

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

Sometimes, as in Nehemiah's case, we face challenges to our service. Nehemiah faces anger, ridicule, discouragement, and other serious challenges, but God frustrates the opposition, and the work continues. The challenges and conflicts we face are real, but service accomplished in God's strength brings glory and honor to Him rather than to ourselves.

This is a lesson about service.

Although we may face challenges and difficulties when we serve the Lord, we can rely on God's strength. Just as God overcame the opposition to Nehemiah's plans, so He promises to meet our needs when we serve Him.

Teacher Enrichment

"Taunts and ridicule, opposition and threats, seemed only to inspire Nehemiah with firmer determination and to arouse him to greater watchfulness. He recognized the dangers that must be met in this warfare with their enemies, but his courage was undaunted. 'We made our prayer unto our God,' he declares, 'and set a watch against them day and night' " (*Prophets and Kings,* p. 643).

"Amidst great discouragement, Nehemiah made God his trust, his sure defense. And He who was the support of His servant then has been the dependence of His people in every age. In every crisis His people may confidently declare, 'If God be for us, who can be against us?' Romans 8:31. . . . The response of faith today will be the response made by Nehemiah, 'Our God shall fight for us;' for God is in the work, and no man can prevent its ultimate success" (*Prophets and Kings,* p. 645).

What is my response to difficulty and opposition? Which of my choices today will reveal that I trust God to win the victory for me? In what area of my life is God my sole support?

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. My Hero* *B. Listen Carefully*	paper, pens/pencils blindfolds, obstacles
* Prayer and Praise	15-20	See page 87. Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.	songbooks, serving hands offering device, world map, pushpins, slips of paper, pens/pencils
2 Bible Lesson	15-20	Introducing the Bible Story Experiencing the Story Exploring the Bible	 Nehemiah actor, simple costume Bibles
3 Applying the Lesson	10-15	*Spat or SALT Scenario*	white/chalkboard, markers/chalk
4 Sharing the Lesson	10-15	*Spat or SALT Role Play*	saltshakers, hats
* 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:
- ☐ paper
- ☐ pens/pencils

My Hero

Distribute paper and pencils/pens. Have students think of a person whom they regard as a hero. Have them write the name of that person on their paper and then create a list of the qualities (or drawing) of the hero they admire.

Debriefing

Ask: **Why did you choose the person you did?** Have someone find the meaning of "courage" and "hero" in a dictionary. **What makes a person a hero?** (Lack of fear; a willingness to do what needs to be done in spite of fear.) **How do we face difficulties and dangers without being afraid?**

Say: **Our power point tells us**

We can rely on God's strength to use us to serve.

B

YOU NEED:
- ☐ blindfolds
- ☐ obstacles

Listen Carefully!

In advance prepare a few blindfolds and an obstacle course in your classroom. Have students get into groups of three. One student in each threesome will wear a blindfold. The other two will guide that student through the obstacles. One person will consistently give right advice and the other wrong. They will vie with each other to get the blindfolded person's attention. If time permits, let each pair have a turn to go through the obstacle course.

Debriefing

Ask: **How did you know whom to listen to? Whom did you ultimately trust? How did you make that decision? Listening for the right voice was a challenge, wasn't it? How was this exercise like our Christian life?**

Say: **This week's power point reminds us that**

We can rely on God's strength to use us to serve.

Prayer and Praise

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 the student's Bible study during the week. Acknowledge any birthdays, special events, or achievements. Give a special, warm greeting to all visitors.

Suggested Songs

"You Are My Hiding Place" (*He Is Our Song,* no. 96)
"Mighty Warrior" (*He Is Our Song,* no. 76)
"He's Able" (*He Is Our Song,* no. 100)
"My God Is So Great" (*Praise Time,* no. 36)

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: **People all over the world are facing challenges as they serve the Lord. Giving our offerings is one thing that we can do to help God provide for their needs.**

Prayer

YOU NEED:
- ☐ slips of paper
- ☐ pens/pencils

Gather in a circle. Say: **Let's bow our heads and think of a conflict in our life right now. Tell God what it is. When you have done that, raise your head.** (When most are finished, continue.)

Ask: **What are ways that God handles conflict?** (He is loving, He is kind, etc.) **Who are people you know who are experiencing conflict?** Have students write the names they think of on slips of paper and place them in the middle of the circle. When everyone has had a chance to respond, pray a short prayer for the people on the slips. Close with a prayer of thanksgiving for a powerful God who is so gentle with people who are hurting.

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

Notes

2

BIBLE LESSON

Introducing the Bible Story

Ask: **When have you come up with an interesting idea for a group activity you just knew was going to be fun for everyone, but one person made fun of the idea and no one would try it?**

Say: **If this has ever happened to you, you can sympathize with Nehemiah.**

Experiencing the Story

YOU NEED:

- ☐ Nehemiah actor
- ☐ simple costume

Invite an adult (a good storyteller) to your class as the character Nehemiah. Provide a simple Bible costume with headdress. (This can be a simple sheet with neck area cut out, tied at the waist.) In advance provide the student story as a script that the person can follow as they relate their "story" to the students. Introduce "Nehemiah" to the class and invite students to listen carefully as he tells about relying on God's strength to serve the people of Jerusalem.

Debriefing

Ask: **What frustrations did Nehemiah experience? Why was this job so difficult for him? How did he manage to continue to serve in such tough times?** Say: **Remember, our power point this week is:**

We can rely on God's strength to use us to serve.

3

APPLYING THE LESSON

YOU NEED:
- ☐ Bibles

Exploring the Bible

Lead your students in a study of some of the Bible promises given by God for our encouragement when we experience trying times.

Divide the class into five groups. Give each group one of the following texts: Exodus 14:13; Isaiah 41:13; Matthew 9:2; Matthew 17:7; Acts 27:22. Then ask each group to read the surrounding verses to find out more about the circumstances behind each promise. Ask each group to share their findings with the class.

Debriefing

Ask: **What can we expect to happen when we are in service for God?** (He will bring all of heaven to help us in times of need. We need not fear conflicts or challenges.)

Say: **Let's read together our power text, Nehemiah 4:15:**

"When our enemies heard that we were aware of their plot and that God had frustrated it, we all returned to the wall, each to our own work" (Nehemiah 4:15).

Say: **God doesn't take away the conflict; He gives us the strength and courage to deal with it. Say the power point with me:**

We can rely on God's strength to use us to serve.

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

Spat or SALT Scenario

Read the following scenarios to your students. At the end of each, ask what spiritual gifts are being displayed.

You are asked to babysit 6-year-old twins Jessica and Sarah. They are nice girls, so you anticipate an easy day. As you settle yourself in a comfortable chair to read, the girls are clearing away the breakfast dishes in the kitchen. Pretty soon Sarah sidles up to complain that Jessica is slopping water around. You call out some advice to Jessica and return to your story. But Sarah is back; Jessica is bumping her. You speak firmly to Jessica and return to your chair. But now the girls are in a verbal skirmish. "Did not!" "Did so!" "Did not!" Then they both yell for your help. Both girls are sweet and you like them a lot. But what is going on? (Accept responses.) **OK, so two people that you like equally are having a spat. It will soon be over. So what do you do?** (Accept responses.) **Yes, basically you want to treat it as a spat, not a world war. Without taking sides, you try to minimize the problem. So how do you do that?** (You can offer a treat if the job is done in three minutes, or stay until it is done, or get them to work separately for a while, or divert their attention.)

Debriefing

Say: **Think of a conflict that you face.**

Ask: **What might you learn from the babysitting spat that could help you resolve your conflict?** (don't take it too seriously; try to divert attention to something else)

Say: **When we are aware of a conflict, let's first apply the spat test. (A spat is a brief petty quarrel or angry outburst.) Ask yourself, is this a spat or a world war? It is probably a spat. Remind yourself that the other person is your friend. Say something friendly and get on with something else.**

If it's war, apply SALT (write the following where all can see):

S — State the problem you can't solve (I see . . .).
A — Ask God for strength to deal with it His way.
L — Listen to what the other person says.
T — Tell the steps you think are needed to resolve the problem.

Then encourage the other person to go through the SALT steps.

The next time you run into a challenge, remember:

We can rely on God's strength to use us to serve.

4 SHARING THE LESSON

YOU NEED:
- ☐ saltshakers
- ☐ hats

Spat or SALT Role Play

Divide the class into groups of six to 10. Give each group a saltshaker and a hat of some kind. Use this opportunity to teach students about conflict resolution, applying the SALT principle presented in the previous activity. As you repeat the words of the power point, "We can rely on God's strength to use us to serve," the saltshaker and hat are passed around the group in opposite directions.

When the students completed saying the power point, the person holding the saltshaker will apply the spat or SALT test explained in the previous activity and the person wearing the hat will react, according to one of the following situations that you read aloud. (A person who ends up with both objects can give the hat to the next person in the circle.) Refer them to the SALT steps on the previous page.

1. The hat person overhears part of a conversation between the salt person and the principal. The hat person starts an ugly rumor suggesting that the salt person is not to be trusted with money. That makes the salt person angry, because she purchases supplies for the class homeless project. Now nobody trusts her with the project funds. The salt person faces the hat person and starts speaking.
2. The salt person and the hat person are elected president and secretary of their class. They have to work together a lot planning the class trip. But lately the hat person seems to have been avoiding the salt person. The salt person knows that they need to get along if they are going to serve as officers of their class.
3. The salt person accidentally kicks the hat person during a big soccer match. The hat person is angry. The salt person apologizes, but the hat person continues persistently making critical remarks that are turning the rest of the class against the salt person.

Debriefing

Read Nehemiah 4:15:

"When our enemies heard that we were aware of their plot and that God had frustrated it, we all returned to the wall, each to our own work" (Nehemiah 4:15).

Ask: **What does this text tell us about facing conflict?** (If you resolve conflict, you can get on with serving; God is the one who really resolves it.)

Closing

Prayer and closing comments:

Pray that God will make your students the salt of the world as they serve during easy times and difficult times. Pray that they will continue to allow God to lead them to overcome challenges so that they will be better prepared to serve others.

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: **Israel renews their covenant with God. We serve others when we share how God has led in our lives.**

Notes

Student lesson

God's Fight

Has anyone ever poked fun at you for doing what was right or tried to force you to stop doing it? Have you ever felt discouraged and wanted to give up? That is just how some of the Jews and Nehemiah felt when they were rebuilding the wall around Jerusalem. Read on to discover what happened.

30th day, Av, Year 20

Sanballat is furious. Today he went through the city roaring, "What are those Jews doing? Will they build their wall back up? Will they offer sacrifices? Will they finish in a day? Can they bring the stones back to life from those heaps of rubble—burned as they are?" Then Tobiah started saying that even a fox could climb up and break down the wall.

I couldn't let this pass. I prayed loud enough for them to hear me: "Hear us, God, for we are despised. Turn their insults back on themselves. Give them over as plunder in a land of captivity. Do not cover up their guilt or blot out their sins from Your sight, for they have thrown insults in the face of the builders."

As usual, they skulked away, but I know they'll be back. We can't let them stop us. You would think they wouldn't be so stubborn, especially since I have a commission from the king. The wall is halfway up! The people are willing to work hard, and I will do everything I can to help them continue.

31st day, Av

Sanballat and Tobiah came back, filled with even more venom. The situation is getting dangerous. I had a meeting with the company leaders before we started work this morning. We prayed and decided to post guards to watch day and night.

Sanballat is not only mean-spirited, but he is lying about us. He taunts us and says we are plotting against King Artaxerxes. Recently Sanballat was heard boasting about his own plot, saying he would sneak in and stop the work by killing us.

If that's not enough, some of the Jews are complaining about the work. A group of men told me the workers are getting tired, and there's too much rubble to continue rebuilding the wall. That last comment really hurt. How can they complain when we're halfway finished? I know the workers are tired. I'm tired too. Indeed, there is a lot of rubble, but we can't afford to get discouraged. We're too close to finishing!

Another group of Jews who live near Samaria came with more discouraging words. They said we would be attacked wherever we went. These men were talking loudly, and it affected the workers so much that they started to slow down. It would be better for our own people who talk like this to just stay away. They do more harm than good. Now the workers are more afraid than ever.

I knew I had to address their concerns, so I developed another plan to defend ourselves in case we are attacked. I'll put some of the men behind the lowest places along the wall, and I'll put some at the open places. I'll make sure families work together and are armed with swords, spears, and bows.

This evening I gathered all the leaders and gave them a pep talk. I told them not to be afraid of Sanballat and Tobiah. I reminded them how great and awesome is the Lord. Then I encouraged them to fight to protect their sons and daughters, their wives, and their homes.

A few days later

The news about our preparing to defend ourselves got back to Sanballat, but we didn't care. We all returned to work on the wall. Of course now only half the men can work. The other half guard the workers. Still, those who carry materials do it with one hand on their weapons. The builders wear their swords.

I arranged for a trumpeter to be with me at all times. Since we are so far apart on the wall, I told the workers that if they hear the sound of the trumpet they are to come to me immediately and trust that God will fight for us!

A workday

It is hard to keep track of what day it is. We are working from sunrise till the stars come out. We stay up nights guarding the wall. It seems we never take off our clothes or weapons. The wall is getting higher. God is with us. He fights for us. Only through His strength are we able to continue building until the city walls are raised completely.

KEY REFERENCES

- Nehemiah 4; 5
- *Prophets and Kings,* chap. 53, pp. 641-645
- *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 6, pp. 115-120
- Our Beliefs, nos. 8, 11, 10

POWER TEXT

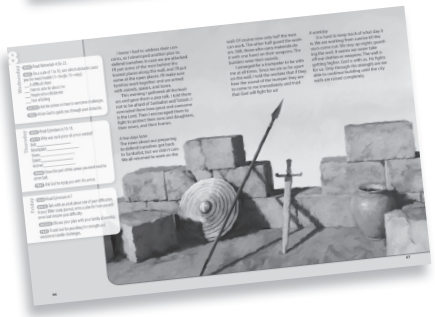
"When our enemies heard that we were aware of their plot and that God had frustrated it, we all returned to the wall, each to our own work" (Nehemiah 4:15).

POWER POINT

We can rely on God's strength to use us to serve.







Sabbath

DO Do this week's activity on page 61.

Sunday

READ Read Nehemiah 4:15 and this week's story, "God's Fight."

LEARN Begin to learn the power text, Nehemiah 4:15.

PRAY Thank God for the promise of His strength.

Monday

READ Read Nehemiah 4:1-9.

WRITE In your Bible study journal, write a brief letter from Nehemiah's perspective to Sanballat, telling him why the people of Israel will continue building the wall.

PRAY Ask God to show you how to respond to a person who gives you a hard time.

Tuesday

READ Read Nehemiah 4:10-15.

WRITE In your Bible study journal, describe Nehemiah's battle plan in your own words.

DO Find a garden plot or flower bed that needs weeding (or an area of ground with a lot of rocks). Take some time to remove the weeds (or rocks) from the ground.

PRAY With each weed (or rock) that you remove, ask God to take charge of the difficulties in your life. Thank Him for doing so.

Wednesday

READ Read Nehemiah 4:16-23.

RATE On a scale of 1 to 10, rate which obstacles cause you the most trouble (1 = tough; 10 = easy).

_____ A difficult chore
_____ Friends who lie about me
_____ People who criticize me
_____ Fear of failing

DISCUSS Ask for advice on how to overcome challenges.

PRAY Allow God to guide you through your obstacles.

Thursday

READ Read Ephesians 6:10-18.

WRITE Why was each piece of armor needed?

Belt: _____
Breastplate: _____
Shoes: _____
Shield: _____
Helmet: _____

DRAW Draw the part of this armor you need most to serve God.

PRAY Ask God to equip you with His armor.

Friday

READ Read Ephesians 6:7.

WRITE Talk with an adult about one of your difficulties. In your Bible study journal, write a plan for how you will serve God despite your difficulty.

DISCUSS Discuss your plan with your family at worship.

PRAY Thank God for providing the strength and wisdom to handle challenges.