

6

Service
We reveal God's love by serving.

POWER TEXT

"But be sure to fear the Lord and serve him faithfully with all your heart; consider what great things he has done for you" (1 Samuel 12:24).

KEY REFERENCES

- Nehemiah 1; 2
- *Prophets and Kings,* chap. 52, pp. 628-634
- *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 6, pp. 104-110
- student story on page 72 of this guide.

OUR BELIEFS

- No. 21, Stewardship
- No. 11, Growing in Christ
- No. 17, Spiritual Gifts and Ministries

OBJECTIVES

The students will:

- **Know** that we can serve God and witness for Him wherever we are.
- **Feel** confident that God will use them wherever they are.
- **Respond** by looking for opportunities to share their personal experiences with God.

Nehemiah's Journal

POWERPOINT

Wherever we are, we serve when we share what we know about God.

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

Nehemiah, cupbearer to King Artaxerxes I, receives word about the troubles his people are experiencing in Jerusalem and goes to God in prayer. He asks God to fulfill His word that if His people return to Him, He will restore them to their homeland. Nehemiah requests help from the king, who gives his permission and help to rebuild the city. Nehemiah enlists the help of other Jews and begins the rebuilding process under adverse conditions.

This is a lesson about service.

Nehemiah shows love by serving first the king and then the Jews.

Teacher Enrichment

"Four months Nehemiah waited for a favorable opportunity to present his request to the king. During this time, though his heart was heavy with grief, he endeavored to bear himself with cheerfulness in the royal presence. In those halls of luxury and splendor all must appear light-hearted and happy. Distress must not cast its shadow over the countenance of any attendant of royalty. But in Nehemiah's seasons of retirement, concealed from human sight, many were the prayers, the confessions, the tears, heard and witnessed by God and angels" (*Prophets and Kings,* p. 630).

"This example of wise forethought and resolute action should be a lesson to all Christians. God's children are not only to pray in faith, but to work with diligent and provident care. They encounter many difficulties and often hinder the working of Providence in their behalf, because they regard prudence and painstaking effort as having little to do with religion. Nehemiah did not regard his duty done when he had wept and prayed before the Lord" (*Prophets and Kings,* pp. 633, 634).

Nehemiah's faithful relationship to his Lord and to the people around him allowed him to serve both well. What do I personally know about God that I can share with others?

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. Service With a Smile* *B. Advancing Toward the Goal* *C. Here Comes Trouble!*	Bibles, blankets, chairs, white lab gown Bibles, blindfolds cardboard boxes, duct/masking tape, scissors
* Prayer and Praise	15-20	See page 67. Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.	songbooks, world map, pushpins, small box, paper, pencils, scissors
2 Bible Lesson	15-20	Introducing the Bible Story Experiencing the Story Exploring the Bible	 Bibles Bibles, prepared slips of paper
3 Applying the Lesson	10-15	*Close to Home*	paper, pens/pencils
4 Sharing the Lesson	10-15	*Serving Together*	
* 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:
- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ blankets
- ☐ chairs
- ☐ white lab gown

Service With a Smile

Ask two student volunteers to come to the front of the class. Ask them to imagine a scenario that is taking place in a hospital. One of them will play the role of a patient and the other volunteer will play the role of a nurse. Set a few chairs in a row and have the "patient" lay down on the chairs. Cover the student with blankets. Tell this student to act being impatient, grumpy, and constantly complaining about the pain. Have the "nurse" put on the white gown. Tell this student to display a calm and patient attitude toward the "sick" person as well as a willingness to help, accommodate, and comfort the patient, despite his/her complaints. If time allows have two other students role play another scenario in which the patient displays a calm and resilient attitude despite the pain, while the nurse is impatient.

Debriefing

Ask: **How could each person have been a witness for God?** Say: **Both persons had an opportunity for serving.**

Say: **Our lesson this week is about serving God when people are making it hard for us. Let's find and read 1 Samuel 12:24 together:**

"But be sure to fear the Lord and serve him faithfully with all your heart; consider what great things he has done for you" (1 Samuel 12:24).

Our power point this week is:

Wherever we are, we serve when we share what we know about God.

B

YOU NEED:
- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ blindfolds

Advancing Toward the Goal

Divide students into two teams. Have a volunteer from team one step forward. Blindfold the student and turn him/her around. Tell the student that his/her task is to walk to the other end of the room without touching any object (other than the floor on which he/she walks). Have the members of his/her team guide him/her verbally to avoid any obstacles. Once the student arrives at the other end of the room, repeat the activity with a volunteer from team two.

Debriefing

Ask: **What did it take to complete this activity? What problems did you have? Who in the group tried to serve by helping the representative of the group achieve his/her goal? What else could you have done to serve each other? How did you feel when your team member accomplished the task thanks to your directions and thanks to the help of the other group members?**

Say: **Our lesson today is about the importance of serving when we are in a hurry or working toward a goal.**

When we serve others we are witnessing for God and also serving Him. Let's find and read 1 Samuel 12:24 together:

"But be sure to fear the Lord and serve him faithfully with all your heart; consider what great things he has done for you" (1 Samuel 12:24).

Our power point this week is:

Wherever we are, we serve when we share what we know about God.

C

Here Comes Trouble!

YOU NEED:
- ☐ cardboard boxes
- ☐ duct/masking tape
- ☐ scissors

Supply the students with cardboard boxes, duct or masking tape, and scissors. Without letting the rest of the class know, select a student or two to be troublemakers during this activity. Instruct the class to use the materials to construct a house in a designated area of your room. While the rest of the students are building, the troublemakers are occasionally to do something to stop the construction, such as hide the tape, cause distractions, criticize the building. When the materials are used up, or after the allotted time, debrief. (Large group: divide into groups of 10-12. Each group works on its own building.)

Debriefing

Ask: **What happened here? What were you trying to do? What made it hard? Did you feel like quitting? How did you feel about the troublemakers?** Read the power text, 1 Samuel 12:24, aloud.

"But be sure to fear the Lord and serve him faithfully with all your heart; consider what great things he has done for you" (1 Samuel 12:24).

Ask: **How successful were you as a group? What frustrated you? Who served you during this activity? How did you serve the others working with you?**

Discuss the obstacles that made working difficult. Then focus on some of the things that are obstacles in our lives that become difficulties that keep us from working well or serving God, such as criticism, not caring, or bad habits, such as tobacco and alcohol use. Discuss the need to keep our focus on Jesus and not let obstacles distract us.

Say: **Our power point this week is:**

Wherever we are, we serve when we share what we know about God.

Accommodations for students with special needs: Allow students with special needs who are experiencing difficulty with this activity to work with a partner who could assist them or assign to them various responsibilities, such as distributing and collecting the materials.

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 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)
"The Lord Is Building Jerusalem" (*He Is Our Song,* no. 117)
"Salt and Light" (*Praise Time,* no. 43)

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:
- ☐ small box
- ☐ paper
- ☐ pencils
- ☐ scissors

Have the students trace around and cut out the shape of one hand. Use the cutouts to cover a small box, making this your serving hands offering device.

Say: **Our hands and hearts are serving when we bring our mission offering for God. Giving offerings for the support of God's work around the world is one way that we serve God.**

Prayer

Use Nehemiah's model for your class prayer this week: praise; confess; remind God of a promise; make your request. An adult leads prayer and introduces each of the four sections to the prayer and encourages the rest to say a word or sentence of praise, confession, or a promise from Scripture. Close by asking God to give each student the power to serve and witness for Him wherever they go and whatever they do.

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

2

BIBLE LESSON

Introducing the Bible Story

Ask: **Can you remember a time you have been in a difficult situation or around a difficult person? How hard was it to serve in that situation? Today we'll learn that God gave Nehemiah the power to witness for Him in a tough time.**

YOU NEED:

- □ Bibles

Experiencing the Story

Ask student volunteers to read Nehemiah 2 in segments. Punctuate the reading with information as follows:

Students read verses 1-3.

Say: **In the palace everyone must leave their personal worries and concerns at the door. They must go about making a pleasant atmosphere for the king.**

Students read verses 4, 5.

Say: **In chapter 1 Nehemiah had been praying for an opportunity to request help from the king for the people who had returned to Jerusalem to rebuild.**

Ask: **When the opportunity is granted, what does Nehemiah do first?** (Asks God's help first.)

Students read verse 6.

Say: **The journey would take about four months (he left in March or April and arrived sometime in August), and Nehemiah would be gone for 12 years.**

Students read verses 7-10.

Ask: **Who are the villains introduced into this story?** (Verse 10: Sanballat and Tobiah.)

Students read verses 11-18.

Ask: **What response does Nehemiah get to his call for service?** (Verse 18: cooperation.)

Students read verses 19, 20.

Ask: **How does he respond to trouble?** (Says God will give them success.)

Debriefing

Ask: **What steps do you think Nehemiah took to hide his feelings from the king? Why do you think he failed?** (He was probably usually so cheerful in service that the slightest change in his demeanor showed more clearly; he was really concerned about his people.)

Say: **Talk about a time you or someone you know had to hide their feelings in order to get a job done or to help someone. Describe how you or someone else felt when you successfully completed a job or helped someone in spite of your feelings.**

Ask: **What lessons can we learn from Nehemiah's example?**

Say: **Remember, our power point this week is:**

Wherever we are, we serve when we share what we know about God.

3

APPLYING THE LESSON

YOU NEED:
- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ prepared slips of paper

Exploring the Bible

On slips of paper write the following numbers and texts; on other slips write the numbers and questions; on still other slips write only the answers in parentheses (no texts or numbers). Allow students to select one of the slips (more if you have a small group). Starting with number one, ask the student with that numbered question to read it. Then ask the student with that numbered text to find it and read it aloud. Finally, ask the students with answers only to decide which one is the correct answer to the question, based on the verse just read.

1. How did Nehemiah handle sad news from his homeland? Nehemiah 1:4 (He sat down, wept, mourned, fasted, and prayed.)
2. What did Nehemiah want God to do for the Jewish people in exile? Nehemiah 1:9 (Bring them back to their homeland.)
3. King Artaxerxes noticed the sad look on his servant's face. What did he realize about Nehemiah's sadness? Nehemiah 2:2 (It was a sadness of the heart.)
4. What did Nehemiah pray concerning the king? Nehemiah 1:11(That God would give Nehemiah success that day by having the king grant him favor.)
5. When the king asked Nehemiah what he wanted, what would relieve his sadness, what did Nehemiah do? Nehemiah 2:4 (He prayed to God.)
6. What problems did Nehemiah face when he returned to his homeland to rebuild the walls? Nehemiah 2:19 (The ridicule and mocking of Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem.)
7. How did Nehemiah respond to the problems he faced in Jerusalem? Nehemiah 2:20 (He said that God would give them success.)

Debriefing

Say: **Remember:**

Wherever we are, we serve when we share what we know about God.

Accommodations for students with special needs:
Allow students with special needs who are experiencing difficulty with this activity to choose the task with which they feel most comfortable.

YOU NEED:
- ☐ paper
- ☐ pens/pencils

Close to Home

Distribute paper and pens/pencils. Ask your students to name places in their lives, such as school, home, best friend's home, etc. Then ask them to write beside the places the names of people with whom they have contact there. Ask them to think about ways they can serve God in these places and witness to these people.

Say: **We can witness for God and serve Him wherever we are, just as Nehemiah did. Nehemiah served God and witnessed for Him while he was cupbearer to the king. He served God while he was rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem.**

Debriefing

Say: **It is often easier to find a way to witness to others if we have thought of a plan before we are with them.**

Ask: **What are some witnessing-through-service activities you could plan? What does having a plan for people on your list help you do? What is our power point this week? Say it with me:**

Wherever we are, we serve when we share what we know about God.

4

SHARING THE LESSON

Serving Together

Plan a service project with your students. Ideally, brainstorm the service ideas with the class. Help them choose and plan the project. Guide them toward something that would include sharing or serving in a challenging environment, perhaps cleaning a community area, feeding the homeless, or "secret service," in which the students do kindnesses without the recipient knowing who did it. Discuss the difficulties they can expect. (Nehemiah was a refugee; if there are refugees in your area, you might choose to serve that community in some way.)

Encourage the students to stand and repeat the power point as a pledge.

Wherever we are, we serve when we share what we know about God.

Closing

Prayer and closing comments:

Say: **Serving God is often difficult because of people or situations. Let's be like Nehemiah and spend much time in thought and prayer, asking God to give us the wisdom and ability to serve Him well even when we are in tough situations or dealing with difficult people.** Close by asking God to bless each student as they plan ways to serve and witness for Him.

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: **Nehemiah makes plans. We can serve God more effectively by careful planning.**

Notes

Student lesson

Nehemiah's Journal

Living with people you don't know very well is not easy. Asking for favors from people you don't know very well is even harder. Our story this week demonstrates how God gives us the power to serve Him and witness for Him no matter how difficult it may be. If Nehemiah would have written a journal about his experiences, his story might have read something like this:

26th day, Kislev, Year 20, Susa, Persia

Hanani came from Judah today. He and his friends said the walls of Jerusalem are broken down and the gates are burned. A lot of the former residents have returned. They are suffering too. They have no protection with the walls down. How could this have happened? I haven't been able to eat since they told me.

29th day, Kislev, Year 20

I can't eat. I can't sleep. I can only cry and pray about Jerusalem. I try not to look distressed while at work.

30th day, Kislev, Year 20

Today I confessed to God the sins of Israel, including my sins and those of my family. We have acted very wickedly toward Him. We have disobeyed His laws. I asked God to forgive us. I claimed His words. He has promised that if His people return to Him and obey Him, He will bring them back to their homeland. I prayed that God would give me the courage—and the chance—to talk to King Artaxerxes today. I trusted that God would inspire the king to allow me to go back and build up Jerusalem.

Nisan, Year 20

Did I have an answer to prayer! While I was serving lunch, the king mentioned how sad I've been looking. How could he tell anything was wrong? I've been trying to hide it, but the fasting and crying has caught up with me. I can't blame him for asking what's wrong. I was afraid for my life, but I told him about Jerusalem anyway. I've been waiting four months for this chance!

He asked me directly, "What do you want?" I said a quick prayer silently before I answered. I told him I wanted to go back to my homeland to rebuild the walls of my city. He asked me questions such as how long it would take and when I would be back. (I'm glad I had thought about these things ahead of time!) As I told him, a thought dawned on me. Maybe he could help me even more. I took a deep breath and asked for letters of introduction for the governors of the provinces on the way, and timber for the walls, the gates, and the house in which I will live. He gave me everything I asked for! He even sent with me a military escort. GOD IS GOOD!

25th day, Tammuz, Year 20, Jerusalem, Judah

I met Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite. They don't know why I'm here, but they know it has to be something important because of the king's military escort. I can tell by the way they talk that they are going to be trouble.

29th day, Tammuz, Year 20, morning

I decided not to tell anyone except a few of the men I brought with me about my plans for last night. We got up at midnight to inspect the city. It's even worse than I thought. I went out through the Valley Gate and rode toward the Dragon Well and the Trash Gate. These are all broken down. Fire has destroyed the gates. Then I rode toward the Fountain Gate and the King's Pool. There wasn't even enough room for me to get through on my horse, so I went through the valley and inspected the wall. So many gaps! I almost get sick when I think about how our beautiful city has been neglected. This is going to take a lot of work, but God will be with us. After we came back, I spent the rest of the night praying.

Later

Everybody—people, priests, nobles, officials—wants to help! I told them what God has done so far and how King Artaxerxes helped me. When I finished they said, "Let us start rebuilding!" And they did. They put on their work clothes and got their tools, and we got started TODAY!

Of course Sanballat, Tobiah, and their new partner in crime, Geshem the Arab, heard about what we're trying to do. They tried to accuse me of treason (they know nothing about my close relationship with the king). I tried to ignore them. No way are they going to stop me! God will give us success.

KEY REFERENCES

- Nehemiah 1; 2
- *Prophets and Kings,* chap. 52, pp. 628-634
- *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 6, pp. 104-110
- Our Beliefs, nos. 21, 11, 17

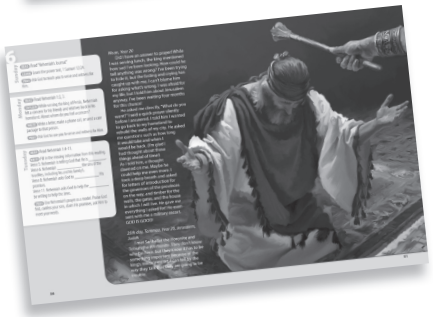
POWER TEXT

"But be sure to fear the Lord and serve him faithfully with all your heart; consider what great things he has done for you" (1 Samuel 12:24).

POWER POINT

Wherever we are, we serve when we share what we know about God.







Sabbath

DO Do this week's activity on page 47.

Sunday

READ Read 1 Samuel 12:24 and this week's story, "Nehemiah's Journal."

LEARN Learn the power text, 1 Samuel 12:24.

PRAY Ask God to teach you to serve and witness for Him.

Monday

READ Read Nehemiah 1:2, 3.

EXPLAIN While serving the king of Persia, Nehemiah felt a concern for his friends and relatives back in his homeland. About whom do you feel a concern?

WRITE Write a letter, make a phone call, or send a care package to that person.

PRAY Ask God to use you to serve and witness for Him.

Tuesday

READ Read Nehemiah 1:4-11.

WRITE Fill in the missing information from this reading:

Verse 5: Nehemiah is telling God that He is _____.

Verse 6: Nehemiah _____ the sins of the Israelites, including his and his family's.

Verse 8: Nehemiah asks God to _____ His promises.

Verse 11: Nehemiah asks God to help the _____ be willing to help the Jews.

PRAY Use Nehemiah's prayer as a model. Praise God first, confess your sins, claim His promises, ask Him to meet your needs.

Wednesday

READ Read Nehemiah 2:2-8.

LIST In your Bible study journal, list three ways you could serve God and others. Do these acts of service today.

PRAY Ask God to help you serve Him to the best of your ability so that someone would be touched by His love.

Thursday

READ Read Nehemiah 2:17, 18.

REFLECT What helped the Israelites decide to start rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem after they listened to Nehemiah's message?

WRITE In your Bible study journal, write a plan for how you could overcome your fears by serving God and others.

PRAY Tell God that you will trust Him and serve others even when you face difficulties and challenges.

Friday

READ Read Nehemiah 2:19, 20.

THINK What reasons do you think Nehemiah had to be afraid of the king? What situations cause you to be afraid or worried? How are God's promises found in the Bible helping you to trust Him in every situation?

PLAN Plan together with your family to serve someone. Do your act of kindness as a surprise.

PRAY Pray for God's strength and wisdom.

1. awesome 2. confesses 3. remember 4. king