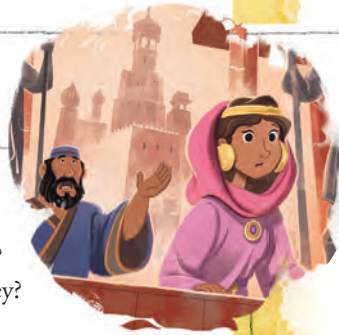


Journal Page

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?



FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Share about a time you did something by faith, trusting that God is in control.
- How might God use your family to make Jesus known in your neighborhood or community?
- Identify a need your family has and pray for God to provide.

Esther Saved Her People

Esther

STORY POINT: GOD MADE ESTHER A QUEEN TO PROTECT HIS PEOPLE.

The king of Persia chose Esther to be his queen. Esther didn't tell the king that she was a Jew. One day, Mordecai heard that Haman was planning to kill all the Jews. Mordecai was upset! He was a Jew; he didn't want all the people he loved to be killed. Mordecai told Esther about Haman's evil plan. Mordecai said, "Ask the king to save the Jewish people."

"No one can approach the king unless the king calls for that person first," Esther said. "The punishment is death—unless the king holds out his scepter."

Mordecai said, "If you don't stop Haman, he will kill you too. Maybe this is why you are the queen." Esther went to the king. He held out his golden scepter. "What is it, Queen Esther?" Esther invited the king and Haman to a feast. After eating, the king said, "What do you want, Queen Esther?" Esther invited him to another feast. The next day, Haman and the king went to Esther's feast. After eating, the king said, "What do you want, Queen Esther?"

Esther spoke up, "There is a plan to kill me and my people."

The king replied, "Who is responsible for this plan?"

"This evil enemy—Haman!" Esther said. The king was angry! He punished Haman and made a law to keep the Jewish people safe from their enemies.

Christ Connection: God was in control over Haman's evil plan to destroy the Jews. Like Haman, Satan wants to ruin God's plan and destroy believers. Satan thought he had won when Jesus died on the cross, but God raised Jesus from the dead and defeated Satan once and for all. All who believe in Jesus are rescued from sin and death.



FOLD

When I'm in Charge | Use the blank area to draw a portrait of yourself as a the king or queen. Then use the blank lines to write down the top three rules you would enforce in your kingdom.



_____'s Rules

- 1 _____
- 2 _____
- 3 _____

Different Plans | Read each sentence. If the sentence is part of Haman's plan, draw a big X through it, but if the sentence is part of Esther's plan, draw a crown around it.



I will hurt the queen.

I am one of the king's most powerful leaders.

I will save my people.

I will host a feast.

I will trust God's plan.

I will send a message to Mordecai.

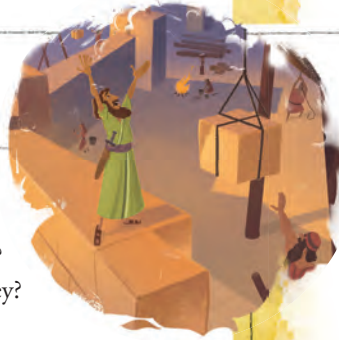
I want all of the Jewish people killed.

I was invited to the feast.

We will fast for three days.

Journal Page

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?



FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- How can we follow Nehemiah's example when we are worried?
- How did God's people show endurance in the story?
- How can we show endurance in our lives?

The Walls Rebuilt

Nehemiah 1–6

STORY POINT: GOD USED NEHEMIAH TO REBUILD JERUSALEM'S WALLS.

God's people had lived in Babylon for 70 years. Then King Cyrus, the king of Persia, took over Babylon and let them go home. Nehemiah stayed and worked for the king of Persia. One day, some men came from Judah. Nehemiah asked, "How are God's people doing in Jerusalem?" The men had bad news: "The people are in trouble. The walls around Jerusalem are broken down, and the gates have been burned down."

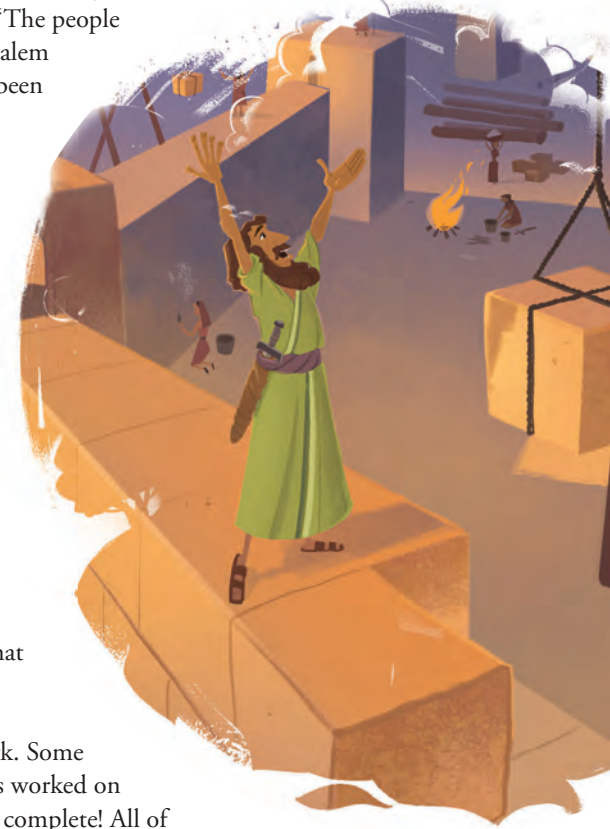
Nehemiah cried. The king asked, "What's wrong?" Nehemiah said, "The city where my ancestors are from is in ruins."

The king sent Nehemiah to Jerusalem. Nehemiah inspected the walls and led the people to start rebuilding the walls and gates. Not everyone was happy that Jerusalem's walls were being rebuilt. Some men who lived nearby were angry. God's people kept working on the walls, but their enemies made a plan to attack them and stop their work.

Nehemiah reminded the people that God was with them. "Don't be afraid. God is great and powerful!"

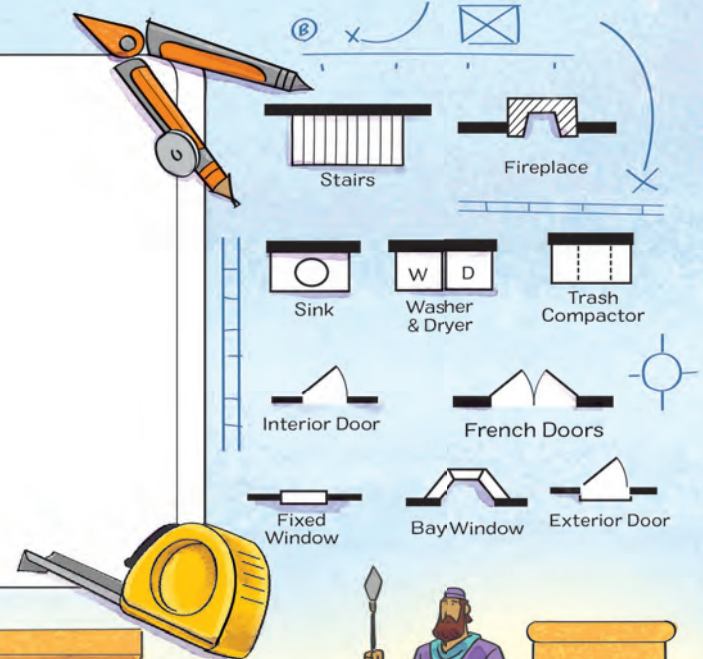
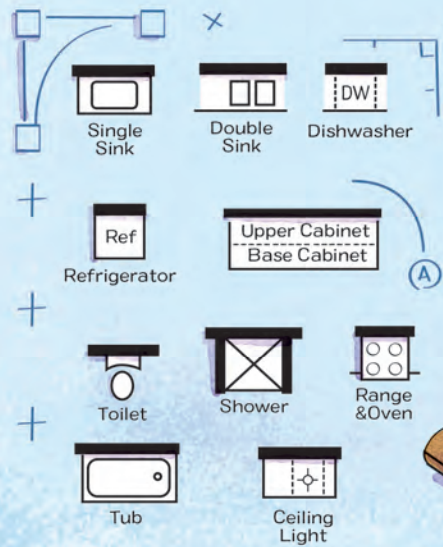
So God's people went back to work. Some stood guard with weapons, and others worked on the wall. In just 52 days, the wall was complete! All of Jerusalem's enemies were afraid because they knew God was with His people.

Christ Connection: Nehemiah led the people to rebuild the walls around Jerusalem to protect them from their enemies. Jesus came to protect us from our greatest enemy, sin and death. He died on the cross and rose from the dead to rescue everyone who trusts in Him.



FOLD

Blueprint | Use the space below to draw a blueprint of your home. Include some of the symbols below to add various features.



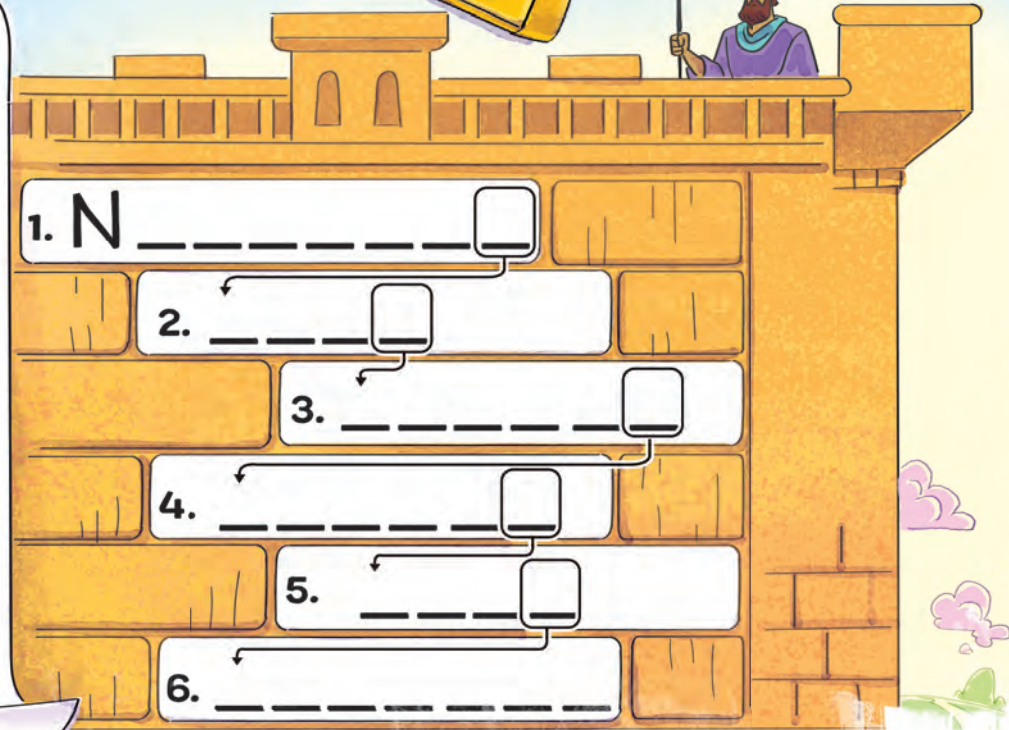
Help Nehemiah!

Fill in the words in the paragraph below and use those words to help Nehemiah finish building the wall around Jerusalem.

Hint: Each word begins with the last letter in the previous word you filled in. (Example: If you filled in "apple", the next blank would start with e.)

N_____ was working for King Cyrus, but he heard that his people needed _____. Nehemiah talked to the king of _____, even though he was _____ he might get in trouble for being sad in front of the king.

The king sent Nehemiah to Jerusalem to help. The people worked hard, but they were scared of their enemies. Nehemiah said "_____" be afraid. God is great and powerful!" They _____ God, and God protected them.



Journal Page

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?



FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- What does it mean to repent?
- Has God's Word ever changed you? How?
- What might you need to turn away from to better obey Jesus?

God's People Repented

Nehemiah 8–13

STORY POINT: GOD'S PEOPLE REPENTED AND PROMISED TO BE FAITHFUL.

All the people in Jerusalem gathered together early in the morning at one of the city gates. Men, women, and children—anyone who could understand—came to listen to the reading of God's Word.

As the sun was just coming up, Ezra the priest brought out the book of the law. God's words were written on a scroll. Ezra stood on a high wooden platform and began to read.

Ezra read the law for hours, and all the people listened carefully. The people stood up; they had respect for God's Word. Ezra praised God, and the people lifted up their hands. The people in the crowd worshiped God. Some of the leaders explained the law to the people. The people began to cry. The people realized they had sinned.

Ezra, the Levites, and Nehemiah the governor said, "This day is holy to the Lord your God. Do not be sad or cry." Even though the people's sin made them sad, this was a happy day.

Ezra said to them, "Go home and prepare a feast! Eat rich food and drink sweet drinks. Share what you have." And again Ezra said, "Today is holy to the Lord our God. This is not a day to be sad because the joy of the Lord is your strength."

Nehemiah led God's people to repent and confess their sin. They agreed to worship only God and promised to obey Him.

Christ Connection: God's Word is powerful. When Ezra read God's Word, the people loved God more and changed their ways. The Bible says that Jesus is "the Word." Jesus is God who came to live with people on earth. Jesus has the power to change our hearts.




FOLD

Celebrate! | Today we are going to talk about a celebration! Draw a line from the picture to the event that it celebrates.



- **Independence Day**
- **wedding**
- **Christmas**
- **football game**
- **birthday party**
- **Thanksgiving**

Join the Party | Use the information from Nehemiah 8 to create an invitation for the reading of God's Word at the city gate.



YOU'RE INVITED!


Who: _____

What: _____

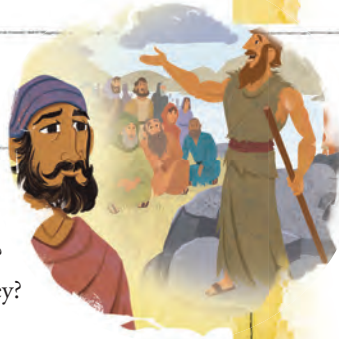
Where: _____

When: _____

Why: _____



Journal Page



- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- Why do we offer our best to God?
- How did God offer His best to us?
- Who was the messenger Malachi said would come before Jesus?

Malachi the Prophet

Malachi

STORY POINT: MALACHI CALLED GOD'S PEOPLE TO REPENT TO PREPARE FOR THE MESSIAH.

God loved His people, and He wanted them to be holy. He wanted them to obey Him completely. So God sent a message to His people through the prophet Malachi. He told the people about their sins and called them to turn back to Him.

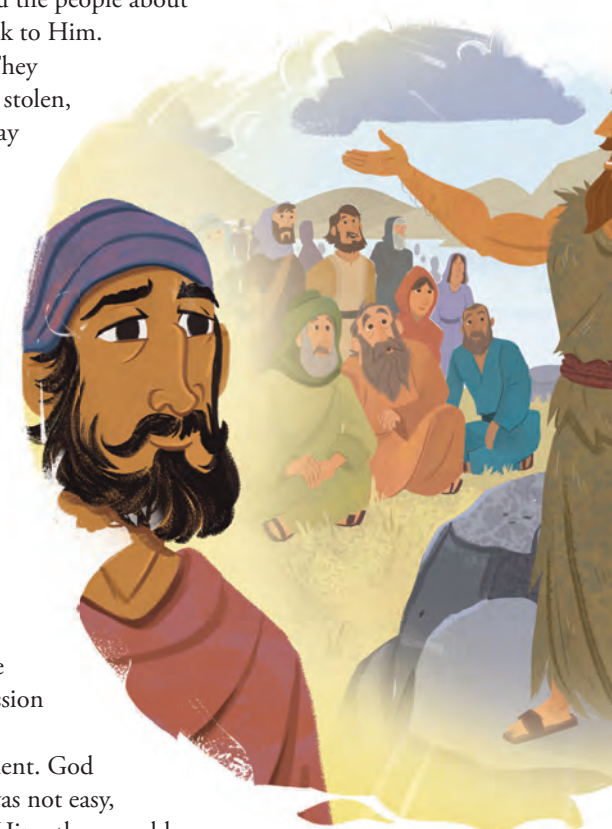
The priests had disobeyed God. They offered as sacrifices animals that were stolen, lame, or sick. They turned people away from God and taught them wrong things.

God warned that a day of judgment is coming when God will punish sin and reward righteousness. God would send a messenger to get people ready for God's promised Messiah. Next, God talked about some of the wrong things the people were doing. They were not offering to God a share of their wealth. Some of the people were saying things about God that weren't true.

Other people did honor God, and God noticed them. "They will be Mine," God said. "I will have compassion on them."

Malachi told the people to be patient. God had not forgotten about them. Life was not easy, but if they served God and followed Him, they would be happy on the day when God would keep His promise to rescue His people.

Christ Connection: Malachi was a messenger—a prophet—who told God's people to repent. Malachi also told about another messenger God would send. This messenger, John the Baptist, would call people to repent and get them ready for a final Messenger, Jesus Christ. Jesus would bring good news of salvation.



FOLD

A Messenger | Complete the maze from Malachi to John the Baptist and then to Jesus.



The Next Letter

Can you decode this message?

Hint: Each provided letter points to the next letter in the alphabet.

I D R T R H R B N L H M F
