

Small Group Leader Guide



THIS MONTH



Today's Suggested Schedule

Prelude: Setting the tone for the experience

See the Getting Ready pages at the end of this document for a detailed description of what you'll need for today. In the Prelude folder of your curriculum, you'll find a variety of other resources to help you prepare. Check out our Pinterest page here <https://bit.ly/447HSZi> for a visual on some of the activities.

Small Group (15 minutes)

Social: Providing time for fun interaction

1. Opening Activity

Large Group (35 minutes)

Worship: Inviting people to respond to God

Story: Communicating God's truth in engaging ways

- Opener
- Worship
- Bible Story (sections about God's Big Story are listed as optional)
- Prayer

Small Group (25 minutes)

Groups: Creating a safe place to connect

1. Bible Story Review: Built to Last
2. Application Activity: The Blueprint
3. Memory Verse Activity: Verse Roll
4. Prayer Activity: Pray and Dismiss

Home: Prompting action beyond the experience

- Devotionals for Kids
- Parent Cue Card (print or email)
- [Parent Cue App](#) and [ParentCue.org](#)

✦ Need activities for a K-5th group? Check out the 2nd-3rd grade guide.

Today's Bible Story

Nehemiah

Nehemiah 1-4; 6:1-15

Bottom Line

God can help you do big things.

Memory Verse

Those who trust in the LORD will receive new strength. They will fly as high as eagles. They will run and not get tired. They will walk and not grow weak.

Isaiah 40:31 NIV



Inclusive Pro Tips

This leader guide is designed to be inclusive of children with a special need, learning difference, or disability who attend a group with their peers. See highlighted sections below for additional inclusive pro tips.

SOCIAL

Opening Activity



What You Need

- ☐ Offering container
- ☐ Large LEGO® bricks or building blocks
- ☐ Timer



Inclusive Pro Tips

Provide a seated option where kids can work together around a table instead of the floor.

Use blocks with easy-grip features to support fine motor skills (like these: bit.ly/4IciKK8).

① What You Do

Pray for your group before they arrive → Pray for kids who will visit your group for the first time. Thank God that He goes with you through everything and helps you do even bigger things than you could do on your own. Recall an age-appropriate story about when you asked God for help, and He helped you do something bigger than you'd ever thought you'd be able to accomplish. Pray that kids understand that being obedient in the little things over time is a big thing. Ask God to help the kids learn how to go through all of life with Him so they will do all things together with Him!

1. Greet each kid by name with a fist bump, high-five, smile, or wave as they arrive!
2. Invite any kids who brought an offering to place it in the offering container.
3. Divide the kids into two teams.
4. Give each team a pile of blocks.

Play Together

1. Share the challenge:
 - Each group must attempt to build the tallest tower possible, but only one person can build at a time for 10 seconds.
2. Use the timer to count off 10 seconds per builder.
3. After 10 seconds, shout "Switch!" and instruct the next kid on each team to take over.
4. Repeat several rounds until every kid gets a turn to build.
5. Gather the kids to discuss.

② What You Say

"Way to go, friends! What a challenge. It took teamwork, focus, and patience. This reminds me of a job that God gave a man named Nehemiah. Nehemiah wasn't even a builder, but God gave him a very big task to rebuild something that was broken.

"In the true story we'll hear from the Bible today, we'll discover how Nehemiah trusted God to help him do something big, and God helped him every step of the way. Let's go!"

Transition → Lead your group to the Large Group area.

GROUPS 1/4

Built to Last

Bible Story Review

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ Prepared cups of mini marshmallows (or clay) and toothpicks
- ☐ Bible marked at Nehemiah 2:17-19 and 4:14
- ☐ Timer
- ☐ *Optional: handheld fan or paper fan*



① What You Do

1. Gather the kids around a table or another flat surface.
2. Give every kid a prepared cup of mini marshmallows (or clay) and toothpicks.

Explore Together:

1. Say, "Nehemiah trusted God with a BIG job—rebuilding Jerusalem's walls! But Nehemiah didn't do it alone, and he didn't let distractions stop him."
2. Demonstrate and explain how the kids will have 3 minutes to build a mini wall using only what's in their cup.
3. Set the timer and encourage them to begin.
4. Once the timer is up, say, "Let's see how strong your walls are!"
5. Test each kid's wall by gently blowing on it or fanning it.
→ Optional: Use the handheld fan or paper fan.
6. Then, invite the kids to form groups of 2-3 and bring their walls.
7. Give the groups three more minutes to rebuild a stronger wall together.

Talk Together:

1. Call on several kids to help you read from the marked Bible, Nehemiah 2:17-18 and 4:14.
2. Ask: "Who did Nehemiah know was helping him?"
→ God! He told the leaders and people of Jerusalem all about God's help!
3. Ask, "What do we discover about who God is in Nehemiah's story?"
→ God helps us when we ask.
→ God is great and powerful.
→ We can do big things with Him.

Continued on the next page. →

Inclusive Pro Tips



If your group would work best in pairs for this activity, let them start in pairs from the beginning!

You can swap mini marshmallows for clay or playdough.

GROUPS 1/4

Built to Last

Bible Story Review

Faith Skills

Hear from God

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Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ Prepared cups of mini marshmallows (or clay) and toothpicks
- ☐ Bible marked at Nehemiah 2:17-18, and 4:14
- ☐ Timer
- ☐ *Optional: handheld fan or paper fan*

MADE TO
Explore

BUDGET FRIENDLY
SUPPLIES

Inclusive Pro Tips



If your group would work best in pairs for this activity, let them start in pairs from the beginning!

You can swap mini marshmallows for clay or playdough.

② What You Say

"Amazing building skills! Nehemiah wasn't a builder, and he lived nearly hundreds and hundreds of miles from his homeland. But God gave him a picture in his heart of what to do, and he trusted God to give him everything he needed to take action on it! He spent time pouring his heart out to God, made a plan, and God provided him with all the understanding and resources he needed to do this epic job.

"The whole task of rebuilding the wall was something Nehemiah did with God. Before Nehemiah went to the king to ask for building supplies, he prayed and asked his friend, God, to help. Whenever Nehemiah needed help throughout rebuilding the walls—and it was often, because it was a big job—he prayed. He asked God for what he needed, and God gave it to him.

"Nehemiah knew it was God who was helping him. In Nehemiah 2:8 (NIRV) he said: *God was kind to me and helped me.*

"The two of them did the big task of rebuilding the walls together.

"You might not be building a wall around a city, but you do face big things too. God might want you to help a younger kid, or start something new like a club that helps others feel seen and loved. Or God might want you to use your creativity (**LIKE YOUR IDEAS, OR YOUR ART**) to tell His story in a way only you can!

"When we face big things like this, the same God who went with Nehemiah through every step goes with us. We can trust God to give us the confidence and everything we need—we just have to talk to Him and ask Him for it! So face every big thing in your life together with God. Tell Him how you feel and ask Him to give you courage, understanding, patience, endurance, physical supplies—everything you need at every step—for what needs to be done.

"God wants you to build everything in your life with Him. God can help you do big things!"

GROUPS 2/4

The Blueprint

Application Review

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ "Blueprint Stickers" Activity Page
- ☐ 11 × 8 ½" blueprint paper (like this: bit.ly/4nywy3i)
- ☐ Pencils
- ☐ Coloring supplies
- ☐ Rulers



Inclusive Pro Tips

Complete this activity in pairs if it works better for your group.

① What You Do

1. Gather the kids together around a flat surface.
2. Give every kid a piece of blueprint paper.
3. Set out the pencils, coloring supplies, and rulers.
4. Say, "Today, you're going to design a confidence blueprint! Nehemiah didn't know how to build walls, but God gave him what he needed. Let's imagine what big things God might help you to do!"
5. Say, "What's something big in your life that you want to do—but you know you'll need God's help with? It could be something that feels hard, scary, or way bigger than you."
 - Share examples like forgiving someone, making new friends, or talking about Jesus at school.
6. Encourage the kids to quietly think or whisper a prayer to God about it.
7. Invite the kids to use the supplies to sketch what they're asking for God's help with.
 - They can draw symbols, words, or various scenes.
8. Invite the kids to write a simple faith declaration on their blueprint.
 - "God is my strength."
 - "God can help me do big things."
 - "I can do this with God's help!"

Make It Personal → Share an age-appropriate time when you had to trust God with something big. How did God help you through it? What did you ask Him for at each step?

② What You Say

"I love each of your blueprints! Nehemiah didn't know how to build walls. BUT he spent time pouring his heart out to God and asking for help—and God gave him what he needed. That's what confidence in God looks like. It's not about knowing how everything will work. It's about trusting that God is with you, that He is bigger than anything you are facing, and He will help you do what He's put on your heart to do.

"But here's something even more amazing: When you choose to follow Jesus, God sends the Holy Spirit to live in you! That means you never have to face anything alone. You and God's very Spirit face whatever your life brings together every day. And He will help You! God can help you do big things.

"If you've already chosen to follow Jesus, that means God is already building something great in your life. And if you haven't made that decision yet but you're curious or have questions, you can always talk to a trusted adult or me. Saying yes to Jesus is the biggest, most important decision you'll ever make!"

GROUPS 3/4

Verse Roll

Memory Verse Activity

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ Assembled dice from the "Verse Roll" Activity Page
- ☐ "Verse Cards" Activity Page
- ☐ Cones or floor tape



Inclusive Pro Tips

For an activity with less movement, allow the teams to roll the dice at a table or on a tray and pick the cards from a stack instead of running.

Encourage the teams to work together to support each other with reading the cards, or have a leader read the cards.

① What You Do

1. Divide the kids into three teams.
2. Mark three start lines with cones or floor tape.
3. Mark three finish lines a few feet away from each start line.
4. Scatter a set of "Verse Cards" Activity Pages at each team's finish line.
5. Give each team a paper dice from the "Verse Roll" Activity Page and a Bible.
6. Invite the teams to look up Isaiah 40:31 as a group using the Bible Navigation Tips.
7. Encourage them to read the verse together.
8. Discuss any words in Isaiah 40:31 that might be unfamiliar to the kids.

Move Together:

1. The kids in each team will take turns rolling the verse dice.
2. After rolling the dice, the kid who rolled it is to retrieve the matching card from the finish line.
3. If a kid rolls a phrase of the Memory Verse they've already collected, they may roll again.
4. After all six phrases of the Memory Verse are collected, the teams are to work together to put the verse in order.
5. Once everyone is finished, read the verse aloud and celebrate!

Finding verses with 2nd-3rd graders

- ① Guide them to open their Bibles to the front and find the table of contents. **(HOLD UP A BIBLE OPENED TO THE TABLE OF CONTENTS TO SHOW THE KIDS WHAT THE PAGE LOOKS LIKE.)**
- ② When the kids find the table of contents, lead them to find the name of the book in the list.
- ③ When they find the book, lead them to look at the page number beside it. Explain that the number tells them on what page they can find that book. Help the kids find the page.
- ④ When they find the book, explain that the big numbers on the page are the chapter numbers. Help them find the correct chapter.
- ⑤ Then explain that the small numbers are verse numbers. Help them find the correct verse in that chapter.

② What You Say

"Great job, teams! Isaiah 40:31 reminds us that when we trust in God, He gives us strength. When we feel tired, nervous, or overwhelmed—God is with you! When you trust Jesus, God gives you new strength through the Holy Spirit. None of us has to be strong on our own. We can keep going because we can trust God to give us EVERYTHING we need to do big things!"

GROUPS 4/4

Pray and Dismiss

Prayer Activity

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ Index cards
- ☐ Coloring supplies



① What You Do

1. Give every kid an index card.
2. Set out the coloring supplies.
3. Challenge the kids to think about something they need God's help with.
4. Invite them to write or draw it on their index card.
5. Lead a short prayer, then give kids time to talk to God quietly or write their own prayer on the other side of the card.

② Prayer

"God, thank You for being good and powerful! You were with Nehemiah, and we are so thankful You are with us too! You've made each of us SO uniquely, and we are so grateful. We want to live for You, God, so help us to do the big things You call us to do. YOU are strong when we feel weak, You are wise when we feel unsure—so remind us of those truths when we don't feel confident. Help us to trust You and take the next brave step You ask us to do. We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen!"

Getting Ready

Social

Welcome the kids and spend time engaging in conversation and catching up. Use this time to create space for them to connect with you and with each other by playing age-appropriate games, asking fun questions, and encouraging friendly interactions. This is a great moment to help kids feel seen, known, and ready to experience today's story.

Groups

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

Choose as many of these activities as you like.

Home

- Print on cardstock or email this week's devotionals and Parent Cue cards.
- Tell parents about our additional family resources: **Parent Cue app** and **ParentCue.org**

Social

Opening Activity

- ☐ Offering container
- ☐ Large LEGO® bricks or blocks, enough for each Small Group to share
- ☐ Timer, one for each Small Group

Groups

1. Built to Last

- ☐ Bible marked at Nehemiah 2:17-18, and 4:14; one for each Small Group
- ☐ Small cups, one for every kid
- ☐ Mini marshmallows or pieces of clay, 10 for every kid
- ☐ Toothpicks, 10 for every kid
- ☐ Timer, one for each Small Group
- ☐ Optional: Handheld fan or paper fan, one for each Small Group
- ☐ Before group time:
 - Fill each small cup with 10 mini marshmallows or pieces of clay and 10 toothpicks.
 - Prepare one cup for every kid

2. The Blueprint*

- ☐ Print "Blueprint Stickers" Activity Page on Avery 94506 Labels or equivalent, one sticker for every kid
- ☐ 11 × 8 ½" blueprint paper (like this: bit.ly/4nywy3i), one page for every kid
- ☐ Pencils, one for every kid
- ☐ Coloring supplies, enough for each Small Group to share
- ☐ Rulers, one for every kid

3. Verse Roll

- ☐ Bibles, three for each Small Group
- ☐ Print "Verse Roll" Activity Page on cardstock and cut out, three for each Small Group
- ☐ Print "Verse Cards" Activity Page on cardstock and cut apart, one set for each Small Group
- ☐ Cones or floor tape, enough to make three start and finish lines
- ☐ Before group time:
 - Follow the instructions on the page to assemble the three dice from the "Verse Roll" Activity Page using clear tape.

4. Pray and Dismiss

- ☐ Index cards, one for every kid
- ☐ Coloring supplies, enough for the Small Group to share

*If you don't have time to do all, be sure to do the starred activity.