

Small Group Leader Guide

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)
- Conversation Starter
- Prayer

Small Group (25 minutes)

Groups: Creating a safe place to connect

1. Application Activity: Take a Snapshot
2. Bible Story Review: Bible Story Extension and Discussion Questions
3. Memory Verse Activity: Verses to Take with You
4. Prayer Activity: Make It Personal with Prayer

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.



THIS MONTH



Today's Bible Story

Nehemiah

Nehemiah 1-4, 6:1-15

Conversation Starter

What do you need help with?

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
- ☐ "Puzzle Cards" Activity Page
- ☐ Timer
- ☐ Pencils



① What You Do

Pray for your group before they arrive → Pray for your group before they arrive. Pray for kids who will visit your group for the first time. Recall an age-appropriate story about a time God helped you finish something you started, even when it was hard. Maybe you wanted to give up, but pushed through because you knew God was with you. Ask God to help preteens grow in perseverance and faith in Jesus. Pray they'll understand that the work God has for them matters. 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. Welcome kids by name as they arrive with a high-five, fist bump, or a wave.
2. Invite any kids who brought an offering to place it in the offering container.
3. Divide the kids into three groups.
4. Explain how to play:
 - "Your group will get a set of cards with a word on them. You'll have 30 seconds to put together a fun sentence with the letters in each word."
 - For example, if the card says "LAKE" the group might write, "Little artists kept eating."
 - Groups can write their sentences on the back of the cards.
5. For each round, one at a time, call out one of the six words.
6. Give the kids 30 seconds to write their silly sentence.
7. When the time is up, call out the word and instruct each group to share their silly sentence for that word.
8. The words are:
 - BUILD
 - PRAY
 - WORK
 - GATES
 - WALL
 - TEAM
9. Reset the 30-second timer for each round.
10. Gather the kids to discuss.

② What You Say

"Awesome teamwork, friends! You know, every word you just created a silly sentence for has something to do with today's true story from the Bible.

Build, pray, work, gates, wall, team? A man named Nehemiah faced tough challenges, but he asked God for help, worked with others, and never gave up hope. Let's go discover how God helped Nehemiah, and how He can help you do big things too!"

Transition → Lead your group to the Large Group area.

Inclusive Pro Tips



Let the kids call out their answers each round instead of writing them on the cards.

GROUPS 1/5

Take a Snapshot

Application Activity

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ Sticky notes
- ☐ Pencils



① What You Do

1. Gather the kids together in a circle.
2. Give every kid at least two sticky notes and a pencil.
3. Say, "Nehemiah noticed God's people were feeling hopeless. He was confident in the assignment God gave him!"
4. Ask: "What things in our world feel broken?"
→ Kids might say bullying, people without food, lying, loneliness, or the pressure to be perfect.
5. Invite the kids to write or draw one idea per sticky note.
6. Ask: "How might God use you to help rebuild what's broken?"
→ Kids might say starting a kindness club, helping a neighbor, or praying for someone.
7. Collect the sticky notes and set them aside for the Prayer Activity

Talk together

1. Explain: "Nehemiah heard of something that was broken and didn't just ignore it. He trusted God and did something BIG! He inspired others to help too."
2. Ask: What's something you want to help rebuild in our world?
→ Give the kids some examples of big things God might ask them to do, like work with their family to have a garage sale to raise money for a cause.
3. Encourage the kids to think about the things they're passionate about. It's likely that God has placed that thing on their heart to help others!
4. Explain that the job in front of you might seem big—so was building a wall for Nehemiah. But Nehemiah asked God for everything he needed every step of the way, and God helped him. You can do the same thing! God loves to help you with the big thing that's on your heart!

GROUPS 2/5

Bible Story Extension

Bible Story Review

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ Floor tape
- ☐ Prepared index cards with obstacles written on them
- ☐ Cones and other obstacle course items

Inclusive Pro Tips

For an option with less movement, use the cards as discussion points (answer the questions that correspond to them) instead of the obstacle course.



① What You Do

1. Set up a simple obstacle course in your group area.
2. Use floor tape to mark a start and finish line for the course.
3. Lay the index cards in various places in the course.
4. Explain that in the obstacle course, there are cards with challenges Nehemiah faced.
5. Instruct the kids to line up behind the start line. Let them race through the course one at a time.
6. As kids move through, encourage each kid to pause at one of the index cards and read the obstacle card aloud.
7. When the kid reads an obstacle from an index card, pause and ask the questions that correspond to that specific obstacle.
8. Encourage the kids who complete the course later to choose an index card that has not been chosen, or hasn't been chosen as often.
9. Let kids share and encourage each other to "finish the course."

Questions for Each Obstacle

1. Fear:
 - "What did Nehemiah do when he was afraid?" (He prayed and kept going. For example, he asked the king for what he needed, even though he was scared.)
 - "What could you pray if you are facing something big and you are afraid?"
2. Enemies:
 - "How did Nehemiah respond when enemies were threatening to attack him?" (He asked God for help and stationed people to get ready to fight.)
 - "What can you pray when someone is making fun of you?"
3. Exhaustion:
 - "How did Nehemiah respond when he was tired?" (He kept going because he knew the work he was doing was good.)
 - "What can you pray to God when you're tired of doing good?"
4. Discouragement:
 - "How did Nehemiah respond when his enemies tried to convince him to give up?" (He asked God to make him strong to finish the work.)
 - "How do you encourage others when they want to quit?"

GROUPS 3/5

Discussion Questions

Bible Story Review

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

→ No Supplies Needed



① What You Do

1. What do you need help with?
2. Nehemiah went to God for everything he needed. What can you do to remind yourself that you can ask God for everything?
3. How does knowing God goes with you through everything give you more confidence?
4. What can you do to remind yourself that God is always with you?
5. Who did Nehemiah go to for help first—God or people? Why do you think that matters?
6. Nehemiah didn't rebuild the wall alone. He needed help. God helped him through people. Who are the people God has put in your life to help you with big things?

Inclusive Pro Tips



Be sensitive to kids who may need extra time to process their thoughts and respond. Be patient and create a safe space where everyone has a chance to share when they're ready.

Frequently check for understanding during discussion by asking questions like, "Can someone share in their own words what we're talking about?"

GROUPS 4/5

Verses to Take with You



Memory Verse Activity

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ Scissors
- ☐ "Origami Eagle" Activity Page
- ☐ "Origami Eagle Steps" Activity Page

Inclusive Supplies

- ☐ Several pre-made origami eagles



Inclusive Pro Tips

Make several origami eagles to give to kids who might struggle to put the art piece together.

① What You Do

1. Give every kid a Bible.
2. Invite them to look up Isaiah 40:31 using the Bible Navigation Tips.
3. Ask if there are any words that are unfamiliar to them in the verse.
4. Repeat the verse together.

Create Together

1. Give every kid an "Origami Eagle" Activity Page and a pair of scissors.
2. Encourage the kids to cut out the square on the "Origami Eagle" Activity Page.
3. Display the pre-made origami eagle so the kids can see the final product!
4. Walk through the steps together using the "Origami Eagle Steps" Activity Page.
5. Once everyone is done, let them write "Isaiah 40:31" with a marker on their origami eagle wherever they'd like.

Talk Together

1. Encourage the kids to set the eagle somewhere at home where they can be reminded that as they keep putting their trust and hope in God, He will give them the strength to do big things!

Finding verses with 4th-5th graders

- ① Ask kids to tell you if the book of the Bible they're looking for is in the Old Testament or New Testament. If it's in the Old, instruct kids to flip slowly, starting at the front of the Bible and heading toward the back, until they find the book they're looking for. If it's in the New, instruct kids to start flipping from the back, going forward to find the book they're looking for.
- ② When they find the book, explain that the big numbers on the page are the chapter numbers.
- ③ Once they find the chapter, explain that the small numbers are verse numbers. Tell kids to find the verse within the chapter they've already found.

Preteen

Small Group

November — Week 5

GROUPS 5/5

Make It Personal with Prayer

Prayer Activity

Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

What You Need

- ☐ Sticky notes from Take a Snapshot (Application Activity)



① What You Do

1. Instruct the kids to join you in a seated circle.
2. Set the sticky notes from earlier in the center of the circle.
3. Invite the kids to silently pick one note that stands out to them (not their own).
4. Direct the kids to read it and hold it as the group prays together.
5. Close in prayer together, thanking God for seeing every need, every big thing, and every broken thing! Thank God for giving the kids strength to do big things this week and always!

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.

Social

Opening Activity

- ☐ Offering container
- ☐ Print "Puzzle Cards" Activity Page on paper and cut apart, three sets for each Small Group
- ☐ Timer, one for each Small Group
- ☐ Pencils, one for each Small Group

Groups

Take a Snapshot

- ☐ Sticky notes, two for every kid
- ☐ Pencils, one for every kid

Bible Story Extension

- ☐ Floor tape, one roll for each Small Group
- ☐ Index cards, four for each Small Group
- ☐ Marker, one for each Small Group
- ☐ Cones and other obstacle course items, enough to make an obstacle course
- ☐ Before group time: Write one of the following words on each index card:
 - fear
 - enemies
 - exhaustion
 - discouragement

Discussion Questions

→ No Supplies Needed

Verses to Take with You

- ☐ Bibles, one for every kid
- ☐ Scissors, one pair for every kid
- ☐ Print "Origami Eagle" Activity Page on paper, one for every kid
- ☐ Print "Origami Eagle Steps" Activity Page on paper, two for each Small Group
- ☐ Markers, one for every kid
- ☐ Before group time: Make one origami eagle to show the kids as an example

Inclusive Supplies:

- ☐ Before group time: Put together several origami eagles for your group.

Make It Personal with Prayer

- ☐ Sticky notes from "Take a Snapshot" (Application Activity)

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**