

LESSON SNAPSHOT

BOTTOM LINE:

Be bold and stand for what's right.

OBJECTIVE:

Kids will learn that a hero is bold for God.

KEY PASSAGE:

Nehemiah 2:1-8

MEMORY VERSE:

"So the last will be first, and the first will be last." Matthew 20:16 (NIV)

SUMMARY:

Nehemiah was an exile in a strange land. When he learned that the wall around Jerusalem had been destroyed, he boldly asked the king for permission to go and rebuild it.

SIMPLE PRAYER:

Dear God,

Make us bold so we can stand up for what is right.

*In Jesus' name,
Amen*

MEMORY VERSE

"So those who are last will be first. And those who are first will be last." Matthew 20:16 (NirV)

"So the last will be first, and the first will be last." Matthew 20:16 (NIV)

"So those who are last now will be first then, and those who are first will be last." Matthew 20:16 (NLT)

"So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen." Matthew 20:16 (KJV)

LARGE GROUP:

Play a hip-hop beat on the drums, and rap the memory verse for the kids, then have them repeat it back to you. Do this 3-4 times. See if they can do it the last time without reading it off the screen.

SMALL GROUP:

Give each kid one word of the memory verse. They have to remember their word and then they all have to stand up and line up in order, so that when they say their word from left to right they will have said the memory verse.

SKIT

BE BOLD, YOUNG MAN!

ITEMS NEEDED:

A "BibleCon" sign (see description below)
A table and chair set up for autographs
An autograph book

CHARACTER BREAKDOWN:

2M

CHARACTERS:

Ernie - A Bible fan
Nehemiah - A bold Bible hero

Nehemiah sits at the autograph table. The sign in front reads, "BibleCon Welcomes Nehemiah." Ernie enters with his autograph book from stage right. He looks off stage left. He stops. He freezes up.

ERNIE: Oh wow. Just wow. I mean my goodness, wow! Look who that is! Will you look who that is? *(to Nehemiah)* Sir?

NEHEMIAH: Hmm?

ERNIE: Would you look who that is?

NEHEMIAH: Who are we looking at, son?

ERNIE: The guy with the cloak and the beard, over there drinking a Mr. Pibb.

NEHEMIAH: Oh yeah. It's Elijah.

ERNIE: I can't believe it. Elijah. He's standing ten feet away from me. My greatest hero of all time!

NEHEMIAH: You gonna go up and say hello?

ERNIE: I want to, but I...

SKIT

NEHEMIAH: But what?

ERNIE: I know it's silly.

NEHEMIAH: Naw, it's not silly. But you need to overcome that fear with a little boldness.

ERNIE: Boldness, huh?

NEHEMIAH: That's right! Be bold! Why if I was as afraid and timid as you, who knows if the walls of Jerusalem would ever have been rebuilt?

ERNIE: You rebuilt the wall of Jerusalem?

NEHEMIAH: Not by myself. Heavens, no! But I was bold enough to tell my king it had to be done. I was bold enough to assemble the Israelites to do the task. And I was bold enough to let the enemies of Israel know they better not stop us.

ERNIE: You're Nehemiah!

NEHEMIAH: You heard of me?

ERNIE: Well, I read the sign. And I heard the name.

NEHEMIAH: I do have my own book in the Bible.

ERNIE: Not even Elijah has one of those. Elijah, wow. You really think I should be bold?

NEHEMIAH: Son, there are many times in life we have to be bold, especially about our faith. When you're feeling that doubt, ask God to make you bold. He will give you the courage you need now, and always.

ERNIE: Thanks, Nehemiah. Hey, would you sign my book?

NEHEMIAH: Of course I will.

Nehemiah signs the book.

NEHEMIAH: See? You can be bold when you want. Now go say hello to Elijah.

ERNIE: I will, sir. And thank you.

NEHEMIAH: Be bold, my friend. The Lord will be with you!

OBJECT LESSON OR KIDS SERMON

ITEMS NEEDED:

A newspaper or magazine

When we pick up a newspaper or magazine, you'll notice some words are larger than others. These are the headlines, the titles of each individual article, and they are in bigger type for a reason – to catch our eye. Readers can open to a page, scan the bold-faced headlines, and quickly find the news that they wish to read. Can you imagine how hard it would be to read a newspaper or a magazine if we didn't make some words bigger than others?

When it comes to standing up for what's right and doing God's will, we need to be bold. We need to stand out and be heard. That doesn't mean we bully others or badger them into following God. It means we have the courage to stand up for what's right, to speak out for those in need, and to do the right thing even when others may not like it.

It takes courage to be bold, and if we ask God, He will give us that courage. Let's not be shy about our faith. Let's be bold, like Nehemiah, so that we can be a witness for God.

LARGE GROUP GAME

BLOCK RELAY

ITEMS NEEDED:

Six cardboard building blocks

INSTRUCTIONS:

Choose two teams of ten, and have them stand in a line back to back. Set a stack of three blocks in front of the line. When you say “Go,” the teams will race to pass the blocks to the back of the line, one at a time, over their heads, and then pass them back to the front of the line under their legs. The goal is to be the first team to pass all three blocks to the back of the line and then to the front, over and then under, and re-stack them in the opposite order.

VARIATION:

If you want to simplify the game, start with the blocks at the back of the line and have the players pass them forward only to re-stack them in the front.

WHAT’S THE POINT?

Bold heroes, like Nehemiah, can bring people together to do great things.

LARGE GROUP LESSON

BOTTOM LINE:

Be bold and stand for what's right.

OBJECTIVE:

Kids will learn that a hero is bold for God.

KEY PASSAGE:

Nehemiah 2:1-8

INTRO:

Early in this series, we talked about some of the lesser known and unusual heroes in comic books. For every Batman, there's a Blue Beetle. For every Captain America, there's Captain Britain. For every Fantastic Four, there are the Great Lakes Avengers. These odd heroes may never share shelf space in the comic book shop with the big boys, but every one of them has a few things in common with their better known counterparts. They all have powers or abilities to fight evil, and they all wear ridiculous costumes.

Take the Blue Beetle for instance. As you can probably guess, he's dressed to look like a blue bug. Batman dresses all in black and has ears on his cowl like a bat, but... he's Batman.

Everyone knows Batman. Everyone loves Batman! Who's the bolder hero: the guy everyone loves in the bat suit, or the guy dressed like a blue bug that makes people say, "I'm sorry, who are you?"

It takes real boldness to be Captain Britain, too. Here's a guy who dressed up in an outfit of red, white, and blue designed to look like the Union Jack of the British flag. You have to wonder how many times a day he get people calling him a rip off of Captain America? And life has to be worse for the Great Lakes Avengers. You're not the Avengers. You're the Avengers of the Great Lakes. That just sounds small time, doesn't it? Yet these heroes still suit up and fight crime just like their movie star cohorts. Talk about being bold!

All kidding aside, being bold is part of being a hero. It takes boldness for any super hero to don a costume, especially one of those that looks like they wear underwear on the outside.

LARGE GROUP LESSON

It also takes boldness to stand up for the Lord. God wants us to take a stand for Jesus. He wants us to stand up for people in need. He wants us to stand up for those who are pushed around and bullied. He wants us to stand up and do the right thing always.

Today's unknown hero actually has a book of the Bible named for him, yet his story is one we often pass by. His name was Nehemiah, and he was a servant to a foreign king during a time when Israel was no longer its own kingdom. Nehemiah got word that his people had been allowed to return to Israel's capital city of Jerusalem, and that the city was in ruins. Nehemiah was sad for his people and his country, and he decided to do something bold.

READ NEHEMIAH 2:1-8

MAIN POINT:

Nehemiah was a trusted servant admired by the king, but it still took great courage for him to do what he did. He asked the king to give him a long, working vacation so he could go home and repair the walls of Jerusalem. The king showed great favor to Nehemiah, not only granting his request to go home, but granting him every request for materials that would be needed to repair the city.

Nehemiah's boldness didn't end there. If you read on through the book, you'll see Nehemiah became a bold leader in the city of Jerusalem, keeping the people together through a difficult rebuilding process. What's more, he had to stand up to the enemies of Israel who did not want to see the walls built. Nehemiah never wavered. His courage came from the Lord, and he saw the job through to the very end. Nehemiah is a powerful book about a very bold hero who set an example for us in how to be bold for God!

DRIVE IT HOME:

I joked a bit earlier about the boldness of a Blue Beetle or a Great Lakes Avenger to wear a crazy costume, but for most heroes, donning the costume with a mask is hardly the boldest action they take. Their boldest action and super hero takes is not with their fashion. It's when they step away from their comfort zone to risk their lives fighting crime. Think about it. Bruce Wayne is a billionaire. So is Tony Stark. They both have lovely homes and all the money in the world they will ever need. It's a bold thing for these men who don a bat suit and a suit of iron to go out and fight crime. But if these men weren't brave enough to be so bold, would anyone else do it?

Nehemiah had it good. He lived in the palace. He kept company with the king. He had nice clothes. He had a nice place to live. He was comfortable where he was. Why on Earth did he choose to leave a palace and the good life, move to a rubble heap of a city surrounded by enemy forces, and try to rebuild that city's walls? Nehemiah saw a problem that needed attention.

LARGE GROUP LESSON

Like Tony Stark and Bruce Wayne, he had the means to solve it. Nehemiah took bold action to solve that problem, and that's how he became a hero.

It's very important to note that Nehemiah did not do this on his own. Before he ever said a word to the king, before he ever packed a bag, he prayed. He prayed hard for God to help his people. Through prayer he found the courage to speak to the king and put his plan into action, and it was by prayer that Nehemiah carried out his plans.

Throughout the book of Nehemiah, we read more of his prayers. He prayed for his people. He prayed for protection against his enemies. He prayed for himself. Everything Nehemiah did was bathed in prayer, and through prayer, God gave Nehemiah the strength to finish the job he started.

God wants to make us bold like Nehemiah. He wants us to stand up for the weak, to stand up for our faith, to stand up for what's right. If we pray as fervently as Nehemiah, we will receive the courage to be bold. Nothing can stand against us because when we stand, we stand with the Lord. This week I challenge you to pray for boldness. Pray for the courage to take a stand and do what is right. God will hear you, and He will answer you, just as He did for Nehemiah. He will give you the boldness it takes to stand up and be a hero.

CLOSE WITH A SIMPLE PRAYER:

Dear God,

Make us bold so we can stand up for what is right.

In Jesus' name,

Amen

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION (K-2ND)

ICEBREAKER:

What is one brave or bold thing you have done?

MEMORY VERSE ACTIVITY:

Matthew 20:16

Give each kid one word of the memory verse. They have to remember their word and then they all have to stand up and line up in order, so that when they say their word from left to right they will have said the memory verse.

SMALL GROUP GAME/ACTIVITY:

Challenge the kids to build a human wall or pyramid. How high can they go?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Read Nehemiah 2:1-8

Who was Nehemiah?

Why was Nehemiah sad?

What did Nehemiah ask the king to let him do?

What makes Nehemiah a hero?

How can we find the courage to be bold like Nehemiah?

SIMPLE PRAYER:

Dear God,

Show us how we can be bold like Nehemiah.

In Jesus' name,

Amen

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION (3-5TH)

ICEBREAKER:

What is one brave or bold thing you have done?

MEMORY VERSE ACTIVITY:

Matthew 20:16

Give each kid one word of the memory verse. They have to remember their word and then they all have to stand up and line up in order, so that when they say their word from left to right they will have said the memory verse.

SMALL GROUP GAME/ACTIVITY:

Challenge the kids to build a human wall or pyramid. How high can they go?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Read Nehemiah 2:1-8

Why did Nehemiah ask the king to let him rebuild Jerusalem?

Why was Nehemiah always praying?

What makes Nehemiah a hero?

How can we find the courage to be bold like Nehemiah?

What are some bold things we can do for the Lord?

SIMPLE PRAYER:

Dear God,

Show us how we can be bold like Nehemiah.

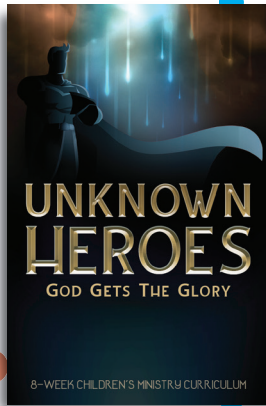
In Jesus' name,

Amen

POWERPOINT REVIEW GAME

MULTIPLE CHOICE

1. Nehemiah was _____.
A. a prophet
B. a servant of a king*
C. a king
2. Nehemiah asked the king to _____.
A. let him rebuild the wall in Jerusalem*
B. release his people from slavery
C. give him a vacation
3. Before Nehemiah did anything, he always _____.
A. put his requests in writing
B. reminded the king what a faithful servant he was
C. prayed*
4. God wants us to be _____.
A. timid
B. bold*
C. quiet
5. Because of Nehemiah's boldness, the Jewish people were able to move back to _____.
A. Babylon
B. Persia
C. Jerusalem*



MAKE IT STICK

5 Simple Ways You Can Make This Lesson Stick With your Kids

Unknown Heroes Lesson 6

THIS WEEK'S LESSON: NEHEMIAH



IN THE CAR:

Ask your child what they learned about this week on the drive home:

Nehemiah was an exile in a strange land. When he learned that the wall around Jerusalem had been destroyed, he boldly asked the king for permission to go and rebuild it. Nehemiah 2:1-8



HANGING OUT:

Make this week's lesson real:

Give everyone a chance to be bold this week by inviting each person to pray at dinner aloud at least once.



AT DINNER:

Here are some great discussion starters:

- Who was Nehemiah?
- Why is Nehemiah a hero?
- How did prayer help Nehemiah to be bold?



AT BEDTIME:

Quiz your child on this week's memory verse:

"So the last will be first, and the first will be last." Matthew 20:16 NIV



PARENT TIME:

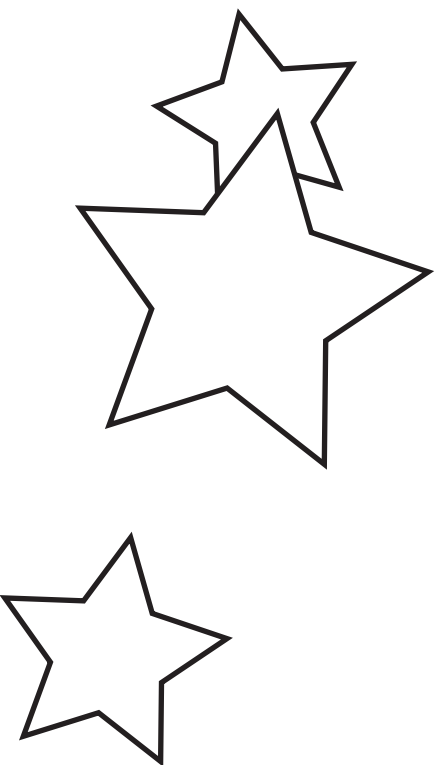
What you need to know:

Nehemiah was a bold hero who bathed everything he did in prayer. Pray with your kids for God to make all of you bold so that God can use you to be a blessing to others.

CRAFT ACTIVITY

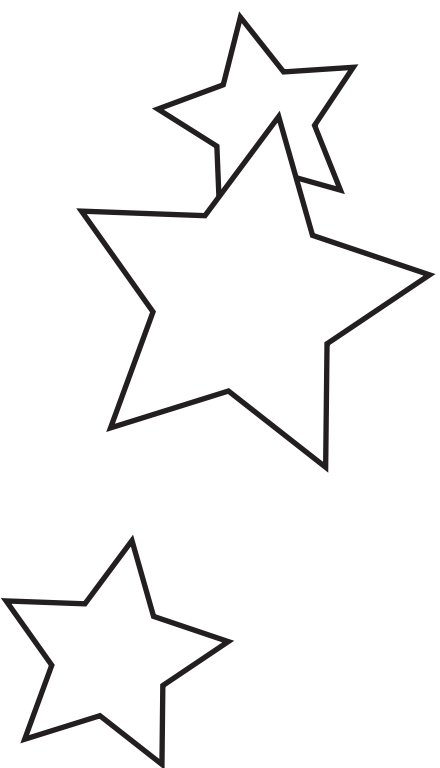
Have the kids draw and color Nehemiah as a super hero. You can give them templates of a human shape to start with, or let them do it freehanded.

As an option to weekly drawings, you can have the kids work on one piece of artwork for eight weeks, in which they will draw all 8 heroes onto a comic book cover of their own design.



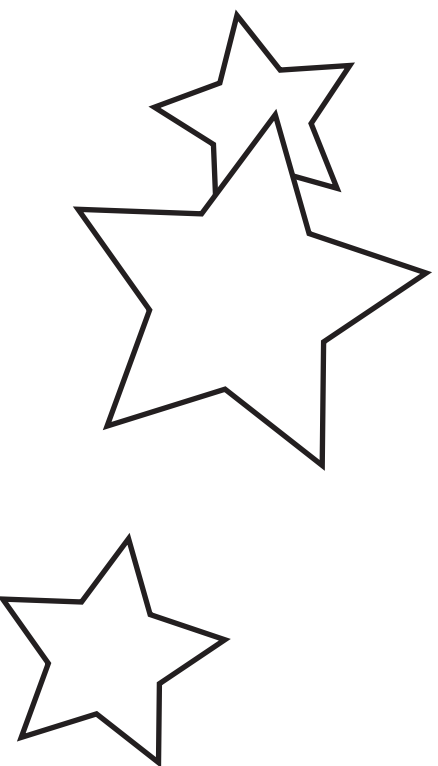
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- Matthew 20:16 (NIV)



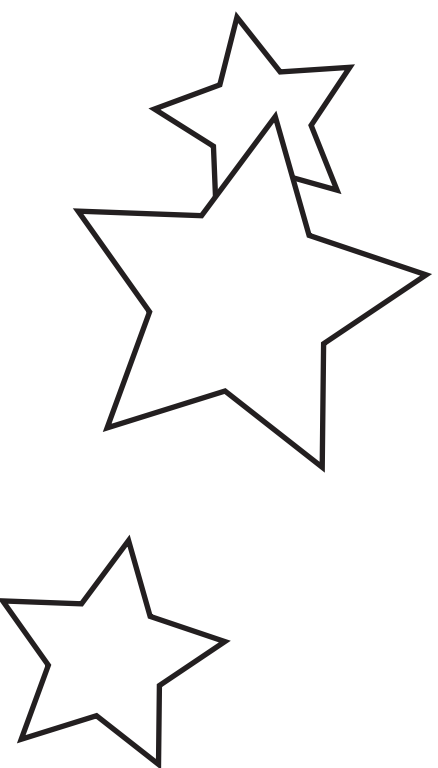
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