



Faith Adventures for Children Together



*Committed to URC Children Together:
enabling everyone to grow more like Jesus
together in the home, church and beyond.*

For guidance on the purpose of the resource and how to use it as a launch pad for your engagement with children and families, please use this link:
<https://urc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/FACT-how-to-sheet.pdf>

Nehemiah 2 1-18 – God’s in this

Theme: Involve God in everything because God’s involved in us

Contents:

Introduction	1
Together	1
Experience	2
Explore	3
Express	5
Handouts	8

Introduction: What would be helpful to know in my planning?

Nehemiah

Nehemiah is one of the few books in the Bible that is written in the first person, believed to have been written by Nehemiah himself around 450 BC. Nehemiah was just a normal person, a layman, not a priest like Ezra and although he wasn’t recognised as a prophet, he was a person who prayed, heard God and would tell others what God was saying. Nehemiah worked for the king in Persia as a cup bearer. His job was to taste everything before the king ate and drank. It was important that he was always with the king in order to keep the king safe. Nehemiah feels God is calling him to go to Jerusalem and rebuild the city walls and restore God’s people to the city. This means leaving Persia. Nehemiah in chapter one has prayed and fasted, seeking God on this issue and now in chapter 2 we see him nervously asking the king to let him go. He sends up a prayer before speaking to the king.

In this session we will explore this type of prayer. We remember that God is always with us in every situation but we still need to take all things to God in prayer. Involving God in everything because God is involved in us; remembering that God would never ask us to do something without helping us to do it.

You may need to be aware of any children in the group who are living with difficult situations and wondering whether God is going to help them.



Together

How do I help my group to come together and get started with the theme?

Gathering prayer

Jesus, our friend

(use alternate index fingers to point and tap the middle of opposite palms)

Be with us today

(two hands, palms up in front of you, move up and down twice)

As we share together,

(two hands, palms up in front of you, move one forward and one back and alternate twice)

Pray together,

(hands together, palm against palm, as though praying)

Play together,

(hands to each side, palms up, make two small circles outwards)

And get to know you better,

(point up with one hand)

As children together in your family

(one hand out, palm down in front of you, move it sideways and up in three 'steps' as though to indicate children of three different heights)

AMEN

(Two thumbs up, and bring fists slowly together to meet in front of you)

OR

Thank you, God, for bringing us together today.

Help us to grow closer to you in all we do.

Help us to speak and to listen, to learn and to grow together,

Adventuring together with you wherever we may go.

Amen

In-person game

Jesus (God) is there, even though we may not be aware of it – sometimes we have to look for where God is in our story. Use some pictures of Jesus – various different sizes – and hide them around the room. Send the children on a race to find them all. This would be an excellent game to take outside if you have an area you can use.

Online game

Sort the children into two teams. Each child contributes a question or two questions to a quiz by sending them to the leader who is question master. The opposing team are asked a question and, if they don't know the answer, they can pick one person from the other team to help them, but without knowing whose question it is. If they choose the right person, and that person gives the right answer, both teams get a point. If they choose the wrong person, that person can either help (if they know the answer) or hinder.



Experience

For this story we recommend using the International Children's Bible

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Nehemiah+2%3A1-18&version=ICB>

Where can I find the story online?

God's Story: Nehemiah by Crossroads Kids' Club <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-fifL0TcGrY>

Nehemiah Rebuilds Jerusalem's Wall by LifeKids <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JIXqTBlys7s>

Songs to support the story

Under fives:

God is with me, Orange Kids Music, KidMotion <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lf9iH8wbSSs>

Older children:

In The Arms by Terrian <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1dxOdCsK-ac>

Spoken word – You Carry Me <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R-p76HnPQsg>

Explore

Ideas and activities to explore this week's Bible passage together

A way to explore the story

Explain to the group that we are going to be thinking about how God is in everything with us but that we should still talk to God about everything.

Begin by doing a remembered Bible exercise. Hand out paper and pens and encourage the group to draw or write one time in the bible that God was with someone, it might be the pillar or cloud for the Israelites, or the angel visiting Mary, or God with Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. You might want to brainstorm some ideas as a group before they get creative.

Add each picture to a bible timeline, a long string or board that we add the pictures to in some sort of historical order.

ASK: How do we know that God was in these situations? How easy or hard is it to know that God is with us in situations?

Remind the group that today's story reminds us that we know that God is with us in everything but it's still important for us to pray and talk to God about the situation.

Use some of the wondering questions whilst the group draw their pictures and chat together.

Now move on to asking: How do you know that God is with you? When do you feel it most? Are there times when we don't feel God is with us?



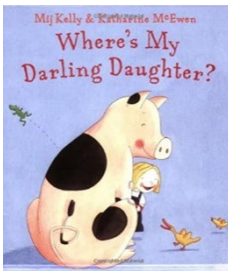
Let's create a clock together to remind us to talk to God in every situation.

See the creative section for instructions on how to make the clock.

Summary, God is with us in every situation, so talk to God.

Modern parables

Jesus used stories to help people understand the things of God, even though they weren't necessarily overtly Christian stories. Lots of children's books can be used in a similar way as a conversation starter on the week's theme. Examples are shared here but you may think of others too.



“Where's My Darling Daughter?” by Mij Kelly and Katherine McEwen
<https://youtu.be/hSU6WtCmcu0> read by a child

Talking together: How might we talk about the story together?

- What do you think Nehemiah prayed?
- I wonder why Nehemiah thought he needed to talk to God?

Wondering together: suggested questions to use during activities

- I wonder when was the last time you spoke to God and why?
- I wonder if God ever talks to us?

What's in the box (for under fives)

Use the special box or bag and sing “What's in the box/bag? What's in the box/bag? Let's see, let's see, what's in the box/bag” (to the tune of The Farmer's in the Dell). You could tap the top of the box twice after the word ‘box’. Pull out the things one by one and then let the children play with them, talking about the theme or the story in simple terms.

This week's box could include:

- Some bricks (God wanted Nehemiah to do some building and mend something that had been knocked down)
- A crown (talk about Nehemiah working for the king. Will the king say yes or no when Nehemiah asks to go away for a while?)
- A mirror (Nehemiah was frightened. Can you make a face that looks frightened in the mirror?)
- A telephone (we use a telephone to talk to our friends, but we don't need a telephone to talk to God)
- A shawl or big woolly scarf (wrap this round like a hug. When we talk to God, it's like asking God for a hug. God is all around us)
- A set of play people to act out the story or random shapes/bits you can move around to make pictures from the story as you tell it (e.g. stones, felt, twigs etc)



Express

Praying together: how can you involve the children actively in prayer?

Please God, hold my hand

This prayer is based on the idea that in all situations we can ask God to be with us, like when someone holds our hand – we feel stronger, supported, loved and encouraged because we know that the person holding our hand is right in there with us. Children often like to write on their own skin – if you are comfortable with this, they could write or draw straight onto their non-dominant hand, maybe using a washable felt tip pen or any other non-permanent media (please check!). Alternatively, they could draw round their hand onto paper and write or draw on it, or make a handprint impression in playdough that they can then write or draw into with a stylus (pencil tip or cocktail stick – be aware of sharp points in your risk assessment).

Into the hand and onto the fingers, write or draw times when they want God to be with them, people they want God to take care of, situations that they want to involve God in. They could lift the prayers up to God by raising them above their heads, or could write “God” in the palm of their hands and fold the fingers in.

Spoken prayer

This responsive prayer is written to encourage children to think about God being with them always. Prayers with children are always best when the children offer their own prayers so, if your group is confident in doing that they can come up with their own statements. We have offered a few suggestions to get you started...

Invite the children to make a loose fist with one of their hands. The prayer starts with a statement and finishes with a five word response. With each word, ‘release’ one finger from the fist so that, at the end of the response, the hand is open, inviting God to hold it. (response in bold type)

When I am happy... **Please, God, hold my hand**

When I am sad... **Please, God, hold my hand**

When I am with my friends... **Please, God, hold my hand**

When I am feeling lonely... **Please, God, hold my hand**

When I have to make a choice... **Please, God, hold my hand**

When I am excited... **Please, God, hold my hand**

When I am worried... **Please, God, hold my hand**

When I am playing... **Please, God, hold my hand**

When I am working... **Please, God, hold my hand**

When I am praying... **Please, God, hold my hand**



Responding together

Here are some suggested crafts and activities, and there is a colouring sheet at the end of this resource. You could also use small play toys and/or have a basket of resources available so children can choose their own way to respond. [See here for more suggestions.](#)

With an online group, plan whether to deliver any resources in advance or how you will encourage them to use what they've got to hand in their response.

However you do it, it is good for the adults to engage in the response too, and all chat together.



Clock of your day

You will need:

A paper plate.

Split pin

A small piece of card

What you do:

Divide the paper plate into times/events of the day, e.g. waking up, getting dressed, breakfast time, school time, playing time, lunch time, home time, dinner time, going to bed.

Cut an arrow shape from the small piece of card and write on it "time to talk to God".

Punch a small hole in the centre of the plate and in the blunt end of the arrow and join them together using a split pin.

Encourage the children to think about the times they talk to God. Use the clock as a reminder that we can involve God in everything that happens during our day, talking about our feelings and the things that are God might be asking us to do.

Strengthening activity

Sometimes we find ourselves in situations where we know the right thing to do, but we might feel quite weak trying to do them on our own. We're never really alone, though, because God is involved in us and everything we do, especially when it's things God has asked us to do. Prayer can make us stronger – we are involving God.

You will need:

A range of materials, e.g., wool, paper, flour, etc

A range of things which could make them stronger e.g., glue, water, wire etc

What you do:

Talk to the children about how we can make something which seems weak into something stronger using just one thing. Allow them to experiment with the different things on the table / tray. How can you make some of the weaker things stronger?

It may be that you dip wool into glue and wrap it around a balloon to allow it to dry – the wool then becomes firmer and will hold its shape, even when you burst the balloon. If you wrap wool around a wire, you can then model it into a shape. You could add a little water to flour and make it into a dough. You could glue paper together and make it stronger, or you could dip paper into glue and papier mache it.

There may be lots of other things you can think of to add to your table for the children to experiment with.



Everyday with Jesus – Walking the Way

What could we do this week to carry on what we've learned? Maybe members of the group could come up with a suggestion. If not, get them to choose from these two challenges:

- Use the clock you have made to help you choose some times of the day when you could talk to God about your day, what is planned and what has happened, the good, the bad and the ugly!
 - Keep a prayer diary – record the things that you want to share with God and also anything you feel God might be saying to you.
-

We hope you enjoyed exploring the story from **Nehemiah** with us.

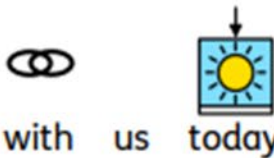
Please let us know what you liked or what you would find useful by emailing lorrainewebb@urc.org.uk

Why not have a look at next week's resource on **Praying for and with one another**

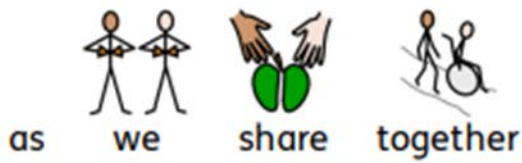




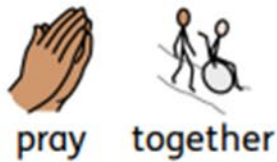
Jesus our friend,



be with us today



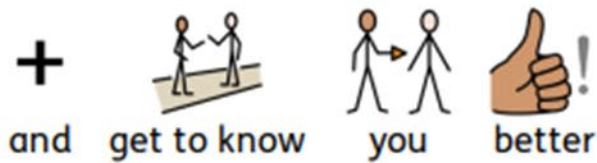
as we share together



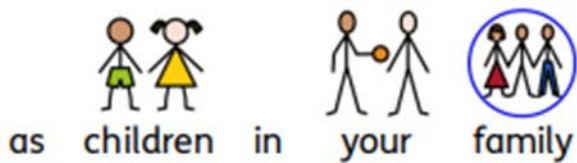
pray together



play together



and get to know you better



as children in your family



Amen



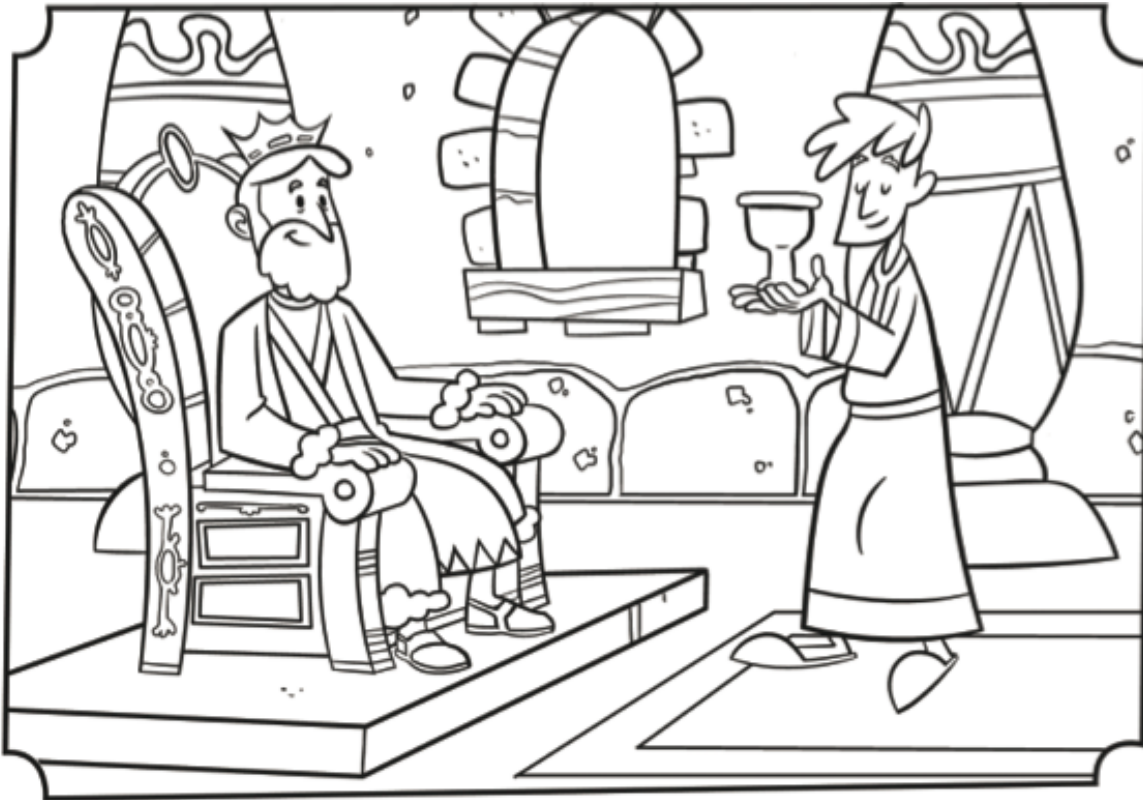
Right middle finger touches centre of other palm, repeat with left hand



Alternate hands back and forth







Nehemiah was the cupbearer to King Artaxerxes, who gave Nehemiah permission to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the city's walls. - **Nehemiah 2**

©Judyfish One 2012

Illustration from whatsinthebible.com



Nehemiah was the cupbearer to King Artaxerxes, who gave Nehemiah permission to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the city's walls. - **Nehemiah 2**

©Judyfish One 2012