

DON'T BE DISCOURAGED

SCRIPTURE - Nehemiah 4

ACTIVITY 1

Materials needed: included printable of encouraging phrases, a piece of construction paper, scissors, glue, and markers (optional).

Say: Has anyone ever told you that you can't do something because you are too small or too weak? I'm not talking about parents telling you to not do something that is unsafe, I'm talking about a big kid telling you, "you can't ride without training wheels, you are too small!", or "you can't jump off the diving board, you are too scared!" or "you can't make a difference, you are too little!". Today we are going to talk about how a group of people told Nehemiah and the people rebuilding the wall that they were going to fail, that they couldn't do it.

SCRIPTURE - Nehemiah 4:1-3

Before getting started with reading/retelling the scripture review who Nehemiah was and what has happened up until this point.

Remember Sanballat from Nehemiah 2? He wasn't happy when Nehemiah came to restore the wall. In fact, it made him angry. He was so mad that he mocked the Israelites and had other people mock them too. They said mean things like calling them pathetic and asking if they could really ever restore the wall and temple on their own. They even said that a small animal, like a fox, could easily knock it down.

Nehemiah heard Sanballat and the other men's insults and he reacted by praying to God. He prayed and he worked. He didn't let the lies and insults of those around him distract him from what God called him to do. They kept working and rebuilt the wall to half of its height. This didn't sit well with Sanballat. He along with the other men became even more angry when they heard they continued to build. So, Sanballat and the men began to plot against Jerusalem. They were so angry at their success that they were willing to start a fight. Well, guess what Nehemiah did? He prayed and he prepared. Nehemiah placed guards around the weak/vulnerable parts of the city (the low walls and families). Nehemiah was prepared to protect his people but he wasn't willing to stop the work God called him to do.

Nehemiah reminded the people that God had brought them this far and that God was with them still. The people knew that the enemy wouldn't win because God was on their side and they were within God's will. So day after day, half the men worked while half kept guard. No one stopped working and no one stopped protecting each other. They were a team. They had confidence because they knew God was with them.

Q: *Why do you think Sanballat was so angry?*

A: *Have you ever heard "hurt people hurt people"? I think Sanballat didn't know God therefore he was only able to act in his sin. His sin was selfish and wanted Jerusalem for himself so the thought that he wasn't going to have it made him mad.*

Q: *Did Sanballat's insults work in discouraging the Jewish people? Why?*

A: *No. They had a strong leader, Nehemiah, who stayed focused on God's truth. He helped them stay focused on their goal to rebuild the wall.*

Q: *What did Sanballat do when his insults didn't work?*

A: *He planned to attack them. He tried harder.*

Q: *Did the threat of Sanballat and his men discourage the Jewish people? Why?*

A: *No. Once again Nehemiah was there to remind them of who their God was and that God was in control. He also helped them to be prepared for what ever the enemy had for them.*

Q: *Do you think the enemy is real? Who is it?*

A: *The enemy is very real. Satan is the enemy, he can come in many forms. He won't always look evil.*

Q: *How will the enemy attack?*

A: *The enemy attacks with lies. He doesn't want us to know who we really are. He wants us to think we can't do anything of value, that we don't matter, and that all the hard work we do trying to "be good" or "do the right thing" isn't worth it.*

Q: *What do you do when the enemy attacks?*

A: *Just like Nehemiah, you pray. While praying to God He will remind you that You are a child of God, that you are called to do serve Him and do mighty things in His name, and that you don't have to work hard to "be good" because Jesus died on the cross to make you righteous and by loving and obeying Him you are being made holy.*

ACTIVITY/CRAFT

Give each child a piece of construction paper and printable encouraging phrases. Instruct the children to color, cut out, and glue the phrases to the construction paper. As you do this, discuss each phrase and how there are often times in life when God calls us to do big or hard things. When God does this the enemy wants to discourage us. He will try to convince us that we can't do what God has called us for. But God gives us everything we need to accomplish what He has called us to do.

CLOSING:

It is easy to listen to the lies of the enemy, to believe we aren't big enough, smart enough, or good enough to do what God has called us to do but God is. In Him we have all the big, smart, and good we need. So whenever the enemy attacks you remember to pray and let God remind you of His truth and guide your steps so that you may serve Him and give Him all the glory.

PRAYER TIME

Take a few moments to thank God for his blessings. Pray for your family. Pray for our church. Pray for our country and its leaders. And pray for God to fill you with His truth so that you never doubt who you are and who you belong to - God.

WITH GOD ALL THINGS
ARE POSSIBLE

GOD'S PLANS ARE THE
BEST PLANS

I AM ENOUGH

DO NOT FEAR

I AM MADE RIGHTEOUS
THROUGH CHRIST

GOD WILL FIGHT FOR
YOU

ONLY GOD HAS
CONTROL

I AM A MEMBER OF A
ROYAL PREISTHOOD

I AM LOVED

GOD IS ON MY SIDE

I AM A CHILD OF GOD

GOD IS WITH ME

IN CHRIST I HAVE
EVERYTHING I NEED

WITH GOD NOTHING IS
IMPOSSIBLE