

Bringing **The Story** Home- Ch. 21



Rebuilding the Walls

Bringing The Story Home is a tool for you to use with your family to connect with the weekly lessons taught in "The Story" curriculum. Feel free to use these activities in a way that fits your family life. Do what works with the time you have each week.

Timeless Truth: God keeps his covenant with those who love him.

Bible Basis: Ezra 7:1, 7, 10–11; Nehemiah 1:2–6, 11, 4:4–6, 13–23, 8:1–12

Key Verse: Don't be afraid of your enemies. Remember the Lord. He is great and powerful.
-Nehemiah 4:14

Parent Tips: Read the key point from the Sunday school lessons that relate to your children. Use the Table Talk questions to start a discussion around the dinner table during the week. The Living Faith activity takes your family to a Web site to play a classic "wall breaker" video game. The Extra Mile encourages your family to do something to make God's people safer.

Get The Point: Nehemiah was sure of God's power. God is on my side.

Table Talk:

- When the walls around Jerusalem were completed, the people celebrated. Ezra, the priest, read God's law to them from sunrise to noon (Nehemiah 8:3). Why do you think he did that?
- What's the longest you've ever been in church? What did you do?
- After Ezra spoke, the people went away and celebrated with great joy, because they now understood God's word. Why did they react this way?
- Do you think knowing God's Word better would help you (like it did for the people in Ezra's time?) How can you learn God's Word?
- How does it feel to know that you've just read through the Old Testament? Do something to celebrate.

Living Faith: Nehemiah was brilliant in getting all of God's people to work together in rebuilding Jerusalem's wall. By working together, they completed the project in 52 days! Before that, the Jews had languished in their attempts to protect and rebuild Jerusalem. King Cyrus first allowed God's people to return to Jerusalem in 560 B.C. Then the second temple was completed in 516 B.C., but for 70 years the city was vulnerable to attack. In fact, many of the surrounding rulers made sure to keep the Israelites weak. But when Nehemiah showed up in 445 B.C., it took just less than two months to secure the walls and give God's people a safe place to live. In all, it took 115 years for God's people to rebuild and fortify Jerusalem.

Have your family pretend to be raiders on Jerusalem by playing a classic "breakout" video game. You can go to www.silvergames.com/game/break-it/ or go to Google and search for "Breakout games." See which family member is best at breaking down the walls. Let everybody take a couple of turns and then give a prize to whoever scores the highest.

Extra Mile is on the back of this paper.

Extra Mile: When Nehemiah learned that God's people were having a hard time and that people were making fun of them, he wept. He didn't want God's people to suffer. He wanted them to be safe and protected.

Sit down with your family and brainstorm ideas on what you could do to make God's people safer in your area. Maybe there's a project at your church that needs to get done. You could:

- Help build a walkway at church.
- Paint or mark the handicap spaces more clearly.
- Put up signs to better direct people to classrooms or the sanctuary.
- Volunteer to help care for babies in the nursery.

There are tons of other ideas. Concentrate on ideas that will keep God's people safe, and then ask the Holy Spirit to guide you to make these ideas a reality. You may need to include another family from church or the whole congregation. Dream big. Nehemiah did, and God helped him accomplish his goal quickly.

Prayer Time: Lord, help us to remember that you are on our side, and that you proved it by sending Jesus to die and rise for us. Fill us with your Spirit, and lead us to your Word. Amen.