

# Nehemiah Rebuilds the Wall

Nehemiah 2:11–6:19



### Worship Theme:



God helps us work for him.

### Weaving Faith Into Life:



Kids will worship God as they commit to working for him.

Session Sequence	What Children Will Do	Supplies
<b>1</b> Let's Praise God! <i>(up to 25 minutes)</i>	<b>Sing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Ready to Serve" (Deuteronomy 13:4)</li> <li>• "I Sing the Mighty Power of God"</li> <li>• "Let's Go!" (Ephesians 2:10)</li> <li>• "Nothing Could Keep Me From You"</li> <li>• "Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah"</li> <li>• "The Lord's Plans" (Jeremiah 29:11)</li> </ul>	<b>KidsOwn Worship Kit:</b> <i>KidsOwn Worship DVD</i> <b>Classroom Supplies:</b> Video equipment, Bibles, paper, pen

## Preschool

Session Sequence	What Children Will Do	Supplies
<b>2</b> Let's Learn the Point! <i>(up to 25 minutes)</i>	<b>A Big Job to Do</b> Put illustrations in order as they hear the Bible story of Nehemiah.	<b>Classroom Supplies:</b> Photocopies of the images at the end of this session, scissors, envelopes
	<b>Strong Workers</b> Stack a wall of blocks, and sing a song.	<b>Classroom Supplies:</b> Blocks
	<b>Sound the Trumpet</b> Run to the trumpet blast, and pray for each other.	<b>Classroom Supplies:</b> Paper-towel tube

Session Sequence	What Children Will Do	Supplies
<b>2</b> Let's Learn the Point! <i>(up to 25 minutes)</i>	<b>* Building the Wall</b> Build a wall with chairs while discussing the story.	<b>Classroom Supplies:</b> Flashlight
	<b>* "The Wall"</b> Watch a video about Nehemiah and the wall.	<b>KidsOwn Worship Kit:</b> <i>KidsOwn Worship DVD</i> <b>Classroom Supplies:</b> Video equipment
	<b>* God's View</b> Put together a puzzle to discover how God sees the big picture.	<b>KidsOwn Worship Kit:</b> Mini Puzzle



Session Sequence	What Children Will Do	Supplies
<b>3</b> Let's Pray! <i>(up to 10 minutes)</i>	<b>The Offering</b> Ask God to use them and their offerings.	<b>Classroom Supplies:</b> Offering bowls
	<b>Human Prayer Wall</b> Think of work to do for God and ask for his help.	
	<b>Closing Prayer</b> Close the session in prayer.	

\* Starred activities can be used successfully with preschool and elementary children together.

Customize your session to fit your needs. You can separate preschoolers and elementary children for Section 2.

Or, if you keep the children all together for the entire worship session, we suggest you choose from the starred activities.

# Nehemiah Rebuilds the Wall

Nehemiah 2:11–6:19

Nehemiah 2:10 hints that the task facing Nehemiah would not be easy. At least two of the leaders of people living near Jerusalem—Sanballat and Tobiah—were unhappy about Nehemiah's plans. They didn't want anyone to help the Israelites.

Nehemiah inspected the wall in secret because he wanted to keep his intentions to himself until the time was right to reveal them. He already knew about the opposition of Sanballat and Tobiah, but he didn't know if other opposition existed, even within the city of Jerusalem. After conducting an exploratory examination of the ruined wall, he gathered the Jewish officials and told them of his plan, of God's blessing, and of the king's help. And they were ready to start building!

The wall was rebuilt in sections by families who probably lived near the sections they rebuilt. After the work began, it wasn't long before opposition arose. Sanballat, the governor of Samaria, just to the north of Jerusalem, mocked the Jews perhaps because the wall was being crudely built using whatever stones and debris were available. However, it was likely about 8 feet thick and 20 to 30 feet high. So in reality, Sanballat may have seen the building of the wall as an amazing feat that threatened his security. Tobiah, probably the leader of the Ammonites just to the east of Jerusalem, stood beside Sanballat in his opposition.

The secret of the Jews' early success in rebuilding the wall is revealed in Nehemiah 4:6: "The people worked *with all their heart*." When the wall was about halfway rebuilt and the gaps were being closed, Sanballat and Tobiah met with other enemies of the Jews and plotted their next steps. The Jews responded by praying and posting guards. Half the men worked, as the other half—well armed—stood guard.

From within the wall, a dispute arose that stemmed from a problem that began before the rebuilding had started. Impoverished Jews in need of loans were being charged exorbitant interest rates and were also being sold into slavery to other Jews. Both of these practices were against Jewish law (Exodus 22:25; Leviticus 25:39-42). The offenders apologized, did what Nehemiah asked them to do, and rectified the situation.

The final opposition to the rebuilding came in two phases: first an attempt to draw Nehemiah out so that he could be killed, and then an attempt to deceive him into showing fear and weakness by hiding in the Temple. Both attempts failed, and the rebuilding continued. For over 100 years the wall had lain destroyed; now, after only 52 days, it had been rebuilt! The people had accepted Nehemiah's challenge, and all their hard work paid off when the task was completed.

## **Devotion for Leaders**

A growing relationship with Jesus makes us stronger and wiser, helping us face the challenges of life on earth.

**Weaving Faith Into Your Life:** As Christ followers, we accept the challenge of bringing God's message to a broken world. As teachers, we help children understand and apply the words and work of Jesus. Sometimes we wonder if we have what it takes—the knowledge, the skill, and the heart! Read Nehemiah 4:6, and pray this prayer today: "God, I offer all my heart and the best of my gifts and strength to help build your kingdom on this earth. Thank you for guiding and growing me into a confident and effective teacher."

## Why We Worship for Leaders

God not only gives us purpose in our lives, but also provides all we need to accomplish his works. Nehemiah faced daunting odds in his mammoth dream of rebuilding the burned and broken walls of Jerusalem. All types of people, from perfume makers to priests, rolled up their sleeves and helped him, stacking stone upon stone until the wall was completed in an astounding 52 days! The heathen people around them realized that the work could only have been done with the help of God. God provides us with tremendous inspiration in Nehemiah's integrity, perseverance, and triumph in the face of terrible odds. Besides miles of rubble, he overcame ridicule, fear, fatigue, the anger and jealousy of others, intimidation, deception, and death threats.

We know for certain that God has great plans for our lives, too. He has a plan for each of us. And the great news is that God helps us work for him! He doesn't expect us to carry out his plans with our own strength and wisdom but with his. Thank you for serving God by helping little children grow in their relationships with him!

## Easy Prep for Leaders

### Let's Praise God!

- Make sure your video equipment is ready.
- Write out these verses on individual half-sheets of paper. Photocopy the written verses so each child can have a verse.
  - "The God of heaven will give us success" (Nehemiah 2:20).
  - "Don't be afraid...Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome" (Nehemiah 4:14).
  - "Our God will fight for us!" (Nehemiah 4:20).
  - "This work had been done with the help of our God" (Nehemiah 6:16).

**"The Wall"**—Watch "The Wall" at least once before the worship session so you'll be familiar with it.

**God's View**—Number the back of each Mini Puzzle piece to make putting it together easier.

**Preschool Activities**—Refer to the preschool pages for preparations.

## 1 Let's Praise God!

Play KidsOwn Worship music videos as children arrive. Greet everyone by name and say, "God helps us work for him." When everyone has arrived,


**Say** **Hello, everyone! God helps us work for him. He doesn't give us an assignment and then abandon us to figure it out alone. No way! As we sing our first song, think about the work God is doing in the world today and how we can join in by serving him. Let's worship him!**




Sing "Ready to Serve" (Deuteronomy 13:4).

**Ask** • **What are some things God is doing in the world today?** (He's helping others know him; he's giving people hope in troubling times.)

**Say** **God is working all over the world to bring people to himself. He's setting people free from the sins that bind them and keep them from loving and serving him. That's good news! In the Old Testament times, people didn't have telephones or e-mail to share good news. They often used a trumpet to call people who would come flocking to hear what they had to say. Let's pretend to blast our trumpets.** Form a "trumpet" with your hand and pretend to blow it. **Let's sing for joy about how great and mighty our God is.**

 Sing "I Sing the Mighty Power of God."

**Say** **God wants everyone to know him and love him. Some of you will become missionaries when you grow up and travel to foreign countries to tell others about Jesus. Many of you will be moms and dads; some of you will be doctors, plumbers, secretaries, or teachers. What you will become is part of what our next song means when it says we are his workmanship, created to do good works. God has a plan for you, and it involves serving others. Let's sing that song now and tell God we want to do his work.**

 Sing "Let's Go!" (Ephesians 2:10).

**Ask** • **What are some jobs God gives you to do?** (Tell others about him; help people in need; be kind to others.)

• **What work do you think God has for you to do today or this week?** (When I start school, I can make friends with people who need to know God; I can invite my dad to worship with us next week.)

• **What work do you think he may want you to do when you grow up?** (I might be a missionary; I might be a doctor to help people.)

**Say** **God has work for you to do here and now, before you grow up. God wants you to love your family and friends. He wants you to reach out to those who don't know him. It's your job to love them and tell them about Jesus.**

Ask some of the younger children to distribute the verses that were photocopied before worship while you continue the discussion.

**Say** **The great thing about God is that he promises to help us work for him. He doesn't expect you to do it by yourself. Isn't that a relief? So if you're shy about talking to others about Jesus, God will help you! If you struggle to obey and be respectful to your parents, God wants to help you.**


Each of you has a Bible verse from the book of Nehemiah. These verses are statements that encouraged Nehemiah and the people to do an impossible job. The job was to rebuild the crumbling, broken-down walls surrounding the entire city of Jerusalem. That was the city where God's people were supposed to live. At times Nehemiah was worried, scared, and discouraged because the job was so big. But God helped him.

When I call out the Scripture reference of your verse, stand up and read your verse aloud with everyone else who has that verse. Are you ready? Call out each reference, and have kids read the verses aloud together: Nehemiah 2:20; Nehemiah 4:14; Nehemiah 4:20; Nehemiah 6:16.


Those are awesome promises! I'm so glad we can talk to God anytime and ask for his help. Let's thank God that nothing can keep us from him.

 Sing "Nothing Could Keep Me From You."

**Say** Take your verse home, and save it for the times you get discouraged and feel you can't do anything right. Remember, God will help you work for him. Just call on him, and he'll be there.

 Sing "Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah."

**Say** Before Nehemiah built the walls around Jerusalem, he had a rather easy job in the palace as cupbearer to the king. It was his job to taste all the king's wine and food before the king did. If anyone tried to poison the king, the cupbearer would die first! How would you like that job? One day Nehemiah knew God had a bigger job for him to do. He was to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. Nehemiah decided to go. He knew God's plans for him were good plans. When God said "Go," Nehemiah went. Will you?

 Sing "The Lord's Plans" (Jeremiah 29:11).

**Pray** Dear God, you are great and mighty. Your Spirit moves across the entire world, searching for people who want to know you and love you. Not only do you give us the work of telling others about you, but you also help us do it. You have given us wonderful promises today. Help us know how to work for you. Thank you for your help. In Jesus' name, amen.

## 2 Let's Learn the Point!

### **Preschool Activities, pages 143-144**

At this time, have the preschool leader invite the preschoolers to go to their own room for this section of activities. Tear out the Preschool Activities page, and give it to the preschool leader. Have the preschool leader bring the preschoolers back to participate in Let's Pray! with the older children. If you prefer to keep all the children together, do the starred (\*) activities. They will work well with both elementary and preschool children.

### **Elementary Activities**

#### **\* Building the Wall**

**Ask** • **Have you ever been in timeout for disobedience? How did you feel?** (Yes, I felt like I messed up; yes, I was bored; yes, I was sad; no, but it doesn't sound like fun.)

**Say** **God's people, the Jews, had not obeyed God. They worshipped false Gods. So God did what he had warned them he would do. He let them be driven out of their homeland to a faraway country called Babylon after their city of Jerusalem was burned down. We're going to pretend you're the Jews exiled to Babylon.**

Have the kids leave the worship area and wait in the hallway or another room. Arrange with a few helpers that while you're gone, they'll put the chairs in a heap in the middle of the floor and turn off the lights. The heap should include one chair for each child, but if your group is large, limit the pile to 10 to 20 chairs and scatter the rest nearby. Any remaining chairs should be upside down, backward, and sideways nearby. While the chairs are being arranged, continue the discussion with the kids in the hallway.

**Say** **Later on, while the Jews were in exile in Babylon, a man named Nehemiah wanted to go back to Jerusalem to build and repair the tall, protective wall that was supposed to surround the city. The wall was important because it kept out enemies and kept the people safe within. Rebuilding the wall was a huge, impossible job, and Nehemiah knew it. He arrived at night, by the light of the moon, and went to inspect what was left of the wall. Here's our moonlight, let's go inspect the wall.**

Hand the flashlight to someone near you, and have that person lead the group back into the darkened room. Have the kids sit in a circle around the perimeter of the room.

**Say** **Nehemiah was upset by what he saw. His beautiful city was in ruins. The wall was burned and broken down everywhere. It didn't seem possible that they could rebuild it. But Nehemiah prayed and told the Israelites, "The God of heaven will give us**

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# Nehemiah Rebuilds the Wall

Session 11

Nehemiah 2:11–6:19

## Worship Theme:



God helps us work for him.

## Easy Prep for Leaders

**A Big Job to Do**—Make enough photocopies of the images at the end of this session to have one page for each child. Cut out the boxes, and put each set of four, out of order, in a separate envelope.

## Using Theo

Consider using Theophilus the FaithRetriever puppet today in these ways:

- Have Theo lead the preschoolers from the main worship area to the preschool room.
- Have Theo teach the song in the “Strong Workers” activity.
- See the KidsOwn Worship Kit for a puppet skit written for today’s worship session.



## A Big Job to Do

Gather the children, and give each child an envelope of pictures.

**Say** Today we’re learning that God helps us work for him. Your pictures will help us tell the Bible story about a man named Nehemiah. Take your pictures out and look at them.

**Ask** • What are some things you see?

**Say** As I tell you the story, see if you can pick out the picture that I’m talking about. We’ll put them in the order that they happen. Are you ready? Listen to all my words before you pick a picture.

Nehemiah had a big job to do. In fact, it was too big for him! So Nehemiah got on his knees. He asked God to help him. This was Nehemiah’s job: to fix the crumbled-down wall all around the city of Jerusalem!

**Ask** • Which picture shows Nehemiah asking God for help?

Have children select the right picture and set it in front of them.

**Say** Nehemiah talked to God’s people about fixing the wall. The wall was important. It would keep enemies out. It would keep the people safe inside. Everyone wanted to help! People worked in families and groups. Everyone worked, even the children like you.

**Ask** • Can you find the picture that shows everyone working together?

**Say** Put that picture next to the one of Nehemiah praying. Good job! Many of Nehemiah’s enemies tried to stop him from building the walls. They laughed at him and tried to fight the workers to make them stop building. But God helped his people work for him. He made them be strong and brave.

Soon the wall was finished—much sooner than anyone expected! Find the picture that shows that the wall is finished.

Everyone wanted to praise God. Even some of Nehemiah’s enemies believed in God because they saw how God helped Nehemiah.

Put the last picture of everyone celebrating next to the other ones. Good job, everyone! Nehemiah had a hard job to do, but God helped him. God helps us do his work.

Have children mix up their pictures and try to put them in order again. Encourage them to tell the story to each other as they do so.



## Strong Workers

**Say** God has work for each of us to do. He wants to help you work for him.

**Ask** • What are some things God wants you to do?

**Say** God wants you to love him most of all. Then God wants you to be good helpers at home. He wants you to love your friends and be kind to animals. Those are some of the ways you can work for God.

**Ask** • How does God help you work for him?

**Say** God gives us our moms and dads to teach us the right things to do. Sometimes they help us do them; your mom or dad might help you clean your room or give the dog a bath. God gives us good food to eat to make us grow strong. That's important so we can be good workers for God. Nehemiah prayed and asked God to make him strong. Let's say a prayer like Nehemiah's prayer.

**Pray** Dear God, strengthen our hands so we can work for you with all our heart. We love you, Jesus. Amen.

Have the children build walls with the blocks. As they build, lead them in singing this song to the tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat."

**Sing** Build, build, build the wall.  
Come on, don't let it fall.  
God helps us all to work for him.  
Build it one and all.

After you lead the children through the song once, have them tell each other one way they can work for God. Then have them build more of the wall and sing the song again.

## Sound the Trumpet

Have children scatter around the room.

**Say** The wall Nehemiah and the people worked on was so big and long that the people couldn't see each other while they worked. Since they couldn't see each other, they couldn't know if anyone was having a problem and needed help. So Nehemiah told the people to listen for a trumpet. Whenever they heard a trumpet, everyone was to gather together where the trumpet was.

Let's pretend we're God's people trying to do his work. We're all in separate spots. When I give you this trumpet, blow it (pretend to blow the paper-towel-tube trumpet) and we'll all come to you.

Give the "trumpet" to a child, and wait while the child pretends to blow it and everyone gathers around.

Do you ever have a hard time obeying? Do you ever have a hard time sharing? We all have a hard time doing the right things sometimes. But God helps us work for him. Think about something that's hard for you to do. [Name of child with the trumpet] will tell us something first. Then we'll all pray for [name of child] and ask God to help [him or her] work for him. Then we'll play the game again until each of you gets to blow the trumpet.

Ask the child with the trumpet to name something that's hard to do. Then ask volunteers to pray for that child. If children need help thinking of things that are hard to do, suggest such things as playing with a younger brother or sister, not fighting, cleaning their rooms, or listening quietly at church.

Have the children scatter, give the trumpet to another child, and repeat the game until everyone has had a chance to be prayed for.

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success." God helps us work for him, and Nehemiah knew that. Everyone pitched in to help build the wall: Goldsmiths, perfume makers, rulers, priests, women, and children all joined together to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.


**Say** When I call out your name, pick up a chair. We'll form a big circle around the pile as if we're rebuilding the wall. Turn on the room lights. Call out the kids' names, one or two at a time. After the "wall" is built, have the kids sit inside it.

While the wall was being built, Nehemiah was mocked, ridiculed, and laughed at by the people who lived nearby and thought he was foolish. Nehemiah's life was threatened, and the workers were also threatened. Did that stop them? No. It only slowed them down a little.

Many times, when we work for God, trouble follows just as it did for Nehemiah. That's because God's enemy, the devil, doesn't want us to do God's work. But too bad for him—God helps us! The wall was finished before anyone believed it could be! That's the kind of thing that happens when God helps us.

### \* "The Wall"

**Say** God definitely helped Nehemiah and his friends do good work on the wall. But what if Nehemiah was an ant?

 Watch "The Wall" video. It shows Nehemiah's story from the perspective of bugs. After the video,

- Ask**
- **How accurate do you think this video was?** (A lot like what really happened, but with ants; it was probably funnier than what really happened.)
  - **What are some things God did to help his people?** (He protected them; he got a lot of people to help; he didn't let the bad guys stop them.)
  - **What's one thing you'd like God to help you do for him?**  
(Answers will vary.)

**Say** Sanballat and Tobiah tried to stop Nehemiah from building the wall, but they couldn't. That's because God was on Nehemiah's side! God helps us work for him, and he has a special job for you!

### \* God's View

Distribute the Mini Puzzle pieces among kids as evenly as possible. Keep the box hidden so kids can't see the picture.

- Ask**
- **Based on your puzzle piece(s), what kind of picture do you think the puzzle will make?** (A tree; a rock; an animal; a tiger.)
- Say** Sometimes we think the work we do every day is unimportant compared to what Moses, Noah, David, Nehemiah, and other



**people in the Bible got to do. But God sees things differently. Everything we do is a piece of something bigger.**

Show kids the picture on the front of the Mini Puzzle box, and help kids put together the puzzle. As each child adds a piece, have the child share something he or she can do for God.

- Ask**
- **What would the picture have looked like if we didn't have all the pieces?** (There would have been holes in it; it wouldn't have been complete.)
  - **How are the things we do like pieces of a puzzle?** (We can't see the whole picture; the picture has holes in it when we don't do our part.)
  - **What does this tell us about God?** (God sees things differently; God can see the whole picture.)

**Say** Sometimes you might think, **What's so exciting about obeying your parents, not fighting with your brothers and sisters, doing your best in school, or cleaning your room? Those don't seem to be very important or exciting jobs compared to Nehemiah's. But nothing you do is unimportant to God because God sees how all the pieces fit together; he sees the big picture. So while you're growing up, let God help you work for him by doing the little things today. God wants us to be faithful in little things and big things. He'll turn everything we do into something extra special.**

### 3 **Let's Pray!**

#### *The Offering*

**Say** God helps each of us work for him. In the story of Nehemiah, God enabled many people to help with the rebuilding of the walls around Jerusalem. Not all of them had the same skills, but they all worked together and accomplished the same goal. And God was right there with them, helping them every step of the way. God takes the contributions of each one of us and makes great things. That's what happens when we give our offering, too. God takes each person's gift and makes great things happen. When the offering bowl comes to you, ask God to use you and your offering to do great things for him.

Take the offering.

#### *Human Prayer Wall*

**Say** Nehemiah shows us that God helps us work for him. It's easy to see what Nehemiah's job was. But sometimes it's not so easy to know what our job is.

**Ask**

- **Have you ever wanted to do something for God? What?** (Yes, I wanted to go to Africa and tell others about him; I wanted to sing in church.)
- **What are some things God wants you to do now, before you grow up?** (Tell others about him; help my friends know Jesus; serve food at the homeless shelter.)

**Say**

**Some of you will do amazing things for God at some point in your lives. But for all of us, most of our lives will be spent doing little things. Those things are very important to God. Lots of little things add up to big things. The people built the wall one stone at a time, one layer at a time. It was very tedious, but God helped them, and they never gave up until it was finished. For you, building the wall one stone at a time might mean reading your Bible every day, praying, obeying your parents, telling a friend about Jesus, or doing your homework. One day at a time—one year at a time. The little things add up to big things.**

**Ask**

- **How did prayer help Nehemiah accomplish his goals?** (God helped him get the supplies he needed; God gave Nehemiah strength through hard times.)
- **What can you learn from Nehemiah?** (To trust God; to work hard for the Lord; to pray about everything.)

**Say**

**God wants to help you work for him. Close your eyes and get very quiet. (Pause.) Now think about something you know God wants you to work on today or this week. Silently ask God for his help. (Pause.) When you're ready, say one word aloud that represents what you're going to work on, and then sit in one of the chairs of the wall. We'll build a human prayer wall by asking God to help us work for him.**

Continue until everyone is seated on the wall.

**Say**

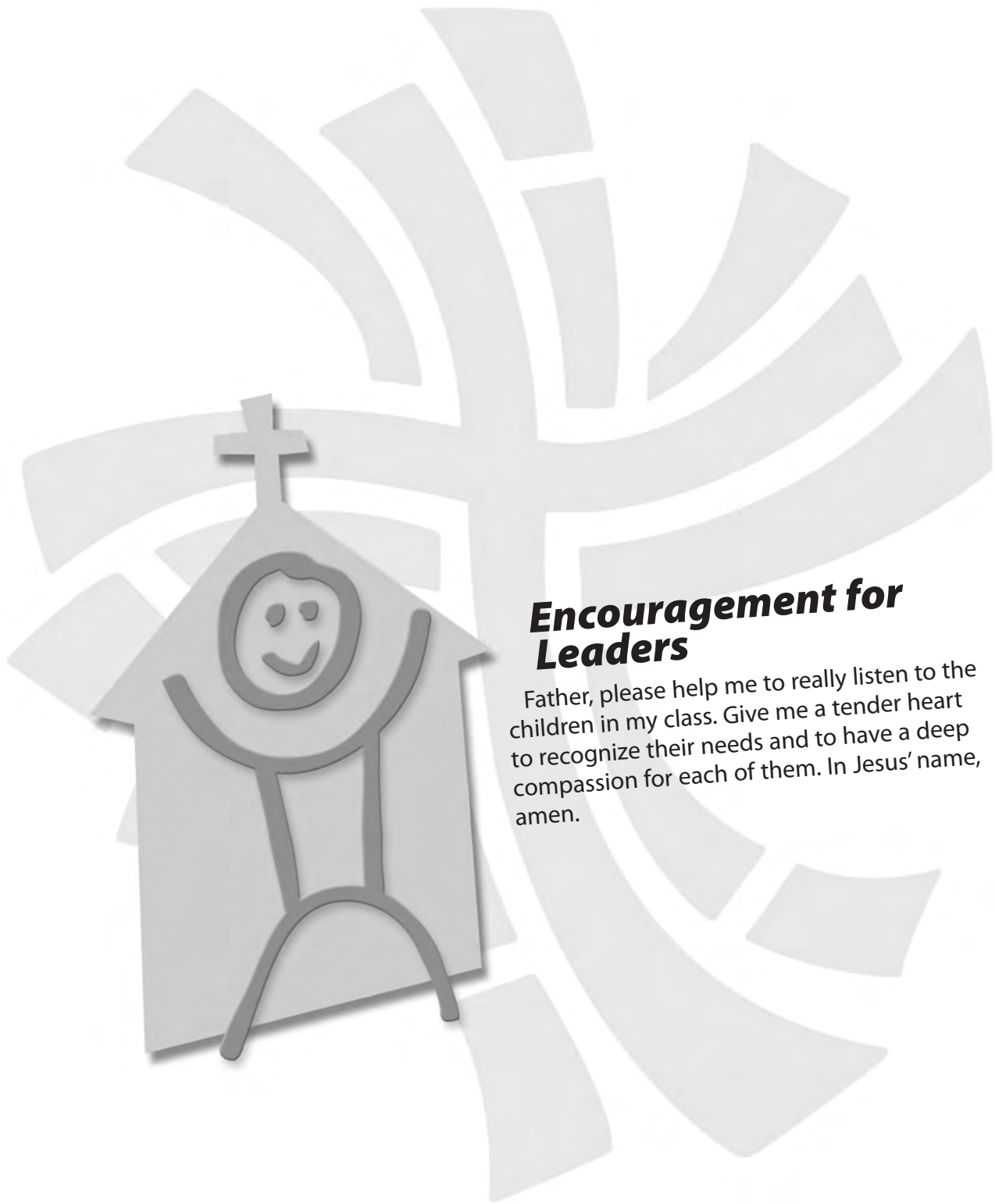
**Good job, everyone. God heard those prayers. He promises to help us work for him, so expect his help this week!**

## *Closing Prayer*

**Pray**

**Dear God, thank you for Nehemiah. Thank you for giving him the strength and wisdom to do your work of building the wall around Jerusalem. God, what is it that you want us to do for you? Please help us hear your voice. Help us remember that through prayer and hard work, and with your help, we can do all that you ask. We praise you for helping us work for you. In Jesus' name, amen.**





## ***Encouragement for Leaders***

Father, please help me to really listen to the children in my class. Give me a tender heart to recognize their needs and to have a deep compassion for each of them. In Jesus' name, amen.