

Level 6, Quarter C

Standing Above the Crowd

Additional Activities

1. Stand Firm

Esther Facts (10-15 minutes)

This fact finding activity uncovers background information on the book of Esther. **Supplies:** Bible reference books

Use Bible reference books to look up background information about the book of Esther. Students should research the historical and cultural aspects of the book and the city of Susa. Children should use the Bible concordance to look up verses using the words: courage, courageous, and queen.

Esther Books (5-10 minutes)

This compare and contrast activity helps kids discover facts about Esther. **Supplies:** children's books about Esther

Check with the younger children's classes and borrow any Bible storybooks about Esther. Let the children read through the books and make a list of the facts that seem to be in most of the stories and what facts don't appear in other stories. Keep this list and as the kids learn about Esther, they can circle the facts that are in the Bible and cross out any non-biblical facts.

2. Be Prepared

King Xerxes (10-15 minutes)

This research project illuminates the cultural and historical information about King Xerxes. **Supplies:** history books or information about King Xerxes

Set out some history books or information about the Persian kings and in particular, King Xerxes I. Have the children look for information that would show the power of the king and the vastness of the empire. The students could build a timeline of King Xerxes, including the military defeat at Salamis in 480 BC.

Preparation Slogan (10-15 minutes)

This creative activity encourages kids to understand that preparation increases courage. **Supplies:** paper, markers

Invite the students to use the slogan "preparation increases courage" to design a poster, catchy song or jingle, advertisement or commercial, or some other way to present the slogan. When everyone has finished, let each person or group give their presentation or show the project.

3. Apply Influence

Letter of Doom (5-10 minutes)

This creative writing activity allows kids to imagine what the king's edict might have said. **Supplies:** paper, pencil

Give each child a sheet of paper. Have them write what they think King Xerxes' edict might have said. Then have the children fold the paper into thirds and on the flap design what they imagine his signet or personalized stamp would have been. If you have a plain white sticker, use it to hold the letter closed and then the kids can put their design on top of the sticker.

Feast of Passover (10 minutes)

This research project explores information about the Feast of Passover. **Supplies:** Bible reference books

Have the children use Bible reference tools to research the Jewish festival of Passover. Encourage the kids to write down information and save it to refer to next week. Discuss the significance of this date to the Jewish people. Help the kids understand how excited Haman must have been that "fate" chose the day before Passover for the annihilation to take place.

4. Earn Rewards

Rate the Emotions (5-10 minutes)

This rating activity helps students judge the emotions from the Bible lesson. **Supplies:** masking tape

Lots of emotions were felt in today's Bible lesson. Have the kids rate those emotions. Put masking tape on the floor to make a rating scale. Mark one end as "high" and the other end as "low." Read the following and have the kids stand on the scale to mark their answer. Ask several children to explain why they rated it the way they did.

- amount of courage for Esther to go uninvited to the king
- amount of joy Haman felt to be invited to the queen's banquet
- amount of patience Mordecai had to wait for the king's honor
- amount of anger Haman felt when he had to honor Mordecai

Character's Traits (5-10 minutes)

This writing activity highlights the character traits of Esther, Haman, Mordecai, and the king. Supplies: paper, pencils

The Scriptures show glimpses of the character traits of Esther, Haman, Mordecai, and the king. Look up these Scriptures and think back to what you've already learned about each person. Work alone or in groups to write a list of character traits about each person.

What does each verse show about the person's character traits?

- 5:1—Esther (courage, patience)
- 5:5—King Xerxes (excited, honored)
- 5:9—Haman (happiness changed to hatred when he saw Mordecai)
- 6:10-11—Mordecai (patiently waited for his honor, humbly went back to the king's gate)

5. Enjoy Blessings

Active Reversals (10 minutes)

This acting exercise allows students to portray some of the reversals found in two Bible passages.

Have the students move the desks or chairs to create a large open space to do some actions. Read Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 and Matthew 5:3-12 to the group. As you slowly read each verse, have the kids act out the different reversals that place. Discuss how both of these passages show reversals.

Power and Blessings (5-10 minutes)

This Bible activity explores how God's power and blessings are displayed throughout God's Word. Supplies: Bible concordance

Use a Bible concordance and look up the word "blessing." Write down the results you learn about some of the blessings God gives and whom God blessed. Discuss how God's power is shown through the blessings that were given. Spend time looking up other Bible passages that show God's power to reverse situations and bless someone to be a blessing to others. Examples: Abraham when Isaac was finally born; David became king after Saul was killed in battle, etc.

6. Celebrate Courage

Purim (10 minutes)

This research project examines the celebration of Purim. Supplies: books about the Jewish celebration of Purim

Esther 9:27 instructs the Jews, their descendants, and all who join them to celebrate Purim. In the New Testament, Christ became Savior to Jews and Gentiles. Have the kids learn about the ways Purim is celebrated by Jews. Discover when Purim is celebrated this year. Make invitations to a Purim party or choose a date to celebrate Purim as a class if the actual date has already passed. This would also make a great end of the Esther unit party.

Esther Mural (15-30 minutes)

This art project allows students to depict aspects they remember from the book of Esther. Supplies: large paper, paints and/or markers

Have the class work together to make a mural depicting the life of Esther and the amazing ways God was at work in her life to bring glory to Himself. Set out a large sheet of bulletin board paper or tape several sheets of large paper together. Let the kids use paints or markers to draw or write about events from the book of Esther.

7. Take Action

Ezra and Nehemiah Comparisons (5-10 minutes)

This research activity enables the children to practice using Bible reference tools. Supplies: Bible commentaries

Set out a variety of Bible commentaries. Help the kids discover the comparisons between the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah. Encourage the students to discover similarities or contrasts between: jobs, dates the books were written, leadership role they took, religious feasts mentioned in the books, etc.

Biblical Cupbearers (10-15 minutes)

This creative writing activity helps the kids imagine what it was like to be the king's cupbearer. Supplies: paper, pencils

Nehemiah wasn't the only cup-bearer mentioned in the Bible, but he is the only one mentioned by name. Let the children read about these other Bible cup-bearers.

- Genesis 40:1—41:13 (cupbearer's dream and Joseph's interpretation)
- 1 Kings 10:5 (Solomon's cupbearers)
- 2 Chronicles 9:4 (Solomon's cupbearers)

Have the kids write a creative story based on this story starter: *My name is _____, cupbearer to his royal highness the king. One day when the king's food was set on the royal table, I noticed something...*

Wall Builders (10-15 minutes)

This creative writing activity helps the kids imagine what it was like to be the king's cupbearer. Supplies: paper, pencils

Nehemiah wasn't the only wall builder—take a look around your town. As you drive, notice the different kinds of walls. Watch a construction television show or video. Talk about some of the work that needs to be done to build a good foundation for the wall.

8. Answer Truthfully

Promises, Promises (5-10 minutes)

This Bible activity inspires kids to confidently claim God's promises. Supplies: Bible concordance

What are some promises that God has given us in His Word?

Make a list of promises and the Bible references. Students may want to use a Bible concordance and look up topics such as faithfulness, love, protection, help, guide, lead, etc.

What are some problems that you have? Encourage responses. **What are some promises from God that could apply to your situation?** Discuss how to pinpoint a key aspect and search the Scriptures to find God's thoughts on that topic or need.

Set out paper and pencils so the kids can write down promises to keep in their Bibles or where they can access the information.

Fearful Leader? (10-15 minutes)

This discussion and creative thinking activity challenges students to evaluate how a fearful attitude affects leaders.

When King Artaxerxes asked Nehemiah why he was sad, what was his initial response? (Nehemiah 2:2 says he was afraid.) **Did it surprise you that Nehemiah admitted he was afraid?** Have the students give quick "yes" or "no" answers. **Why do we assume leaders don't feel afraid? Possible answers: they always look like they are confident, they act brave, they don't show their emotions, etc.** **How would you feel if a leader showed fear?** Encourage responses. **In Nehemiah 2:20, does Nehemiah show any fear when he is met with opposition?** (No, he is confident that the God of heaven will give them success.) **How did Nehemiah get over his fearful attitude?** (He prayed.)

As a group, make up a story titled "There Was a Fearful Leader." Choose one person to say the first sentence of the story. Then let the next person add a sentence. Continue until everyone has contributed at least one sentence or the story has is finished.

If there is time, make up another story titled "There Was a Brave Leader."

9. Build Teams

Worker's Journal (10-15 minutes)

*This creative writing activity challenges the children to imagine what life was like for a wall rebuilder. **Supplies:** paper, pencils*

Lead a discussion about the living and working conditions for the Israelites as they rebuilt the wall. If possible, set out Bible reference tools and encourage the kids to research the topic. Then have the children write a journal entry that could have been written by one of the workers. Let the students share what they wrote with the group.

Insults (10 minutes)

*This group discussion highlights the need to pray for someone who insults you. **Supplies:** paper, pencils*

Read the insult given by Tobiah in Nehemiah 4:3. Explain how foxes would have been something common around the work site. **What is something common in our area that could be substituted for foxes?**

Have the children illustrate a picture of Tobiah's insult.

When Nehemiah heard the insult, he responded in prayer. Who has insulted you? Let's be like Nehemiah and pray for those who insult us. Lead the group in a time of prayer for each person who has insulted someone in the class.

10. Solve Problems

Governor Nehemiah (5-10 minutes)

This group discussion examines Governor Nehemiah's generosity.

Let's take a look at Nehemiah 5:14-18. Have a volunteer read these verses. **Nehemiah was in a position of power, but he didn't use that position to gain things for himself. Instead we see an example of a leader serving others by feeding them at his table with his own food—150 at a time! What did he feed the group?** (Each day they ate one ox, six sheep, chickens and wine.) **Did you know that this is the first time that chickens are mentioned in the Bible?** If you have a Bible concordance, let the kids look up the word "poultry."

Compare and contrast Governor Nehemiah with the other governors. Let the kids share their observations. **How do you think the other governors reacted to Nehemiah's actions? Have you seen a leader treat his or her followers like Nehemiah?**

Imagine that you are leading a group of people. What things would you do to show leadership like Nehemiah? What would you put on your menu for them?

Walls and Gates (10-15 minutes)

*This research activity helps children understand wall and gate construction of Nehemiah's day. **Supplies:** Bible commentaries, handbooks, and historical books, guest speaker (optional)*

Set out Bible commentaries, handbooks, and historical books that show pictures of ancient walls and gates of the walls. Let kids do some research into how walls would have been constructed and what materials would have been used. If possible, ask a church member who does construction work to come and talk with your class. Give children an opportunity to ask questions. Afterwards, have the group draw a picture of what they think the wall and gate might have looked like.

11. Trust God

Pictorial Record—God's Faithfulness (10-15 minutes)

This art project illustrates God's faithfulness to the Israelites.

Supplies: paper, pencils, markers

Read Nehemiah 9:6-37 detailing the Israelites history and God's faithfulness to them. Depending on the number of children in your class, divide the class into eight groups. Assign each group a section of the passage to illustrate (v. 6, 7-8, 9-12, 13-15, 16-18, 19-25, 26-30, 31-37). Put the illustrations together as a pictorial record of God's faithfulness to the Israelites. You may want to have the students show and explain the pictures to younger children.

Feast of Booths (10-15 minutes)

*This research activity explains the reason Jewish people celebrate the Feast of the Booths. **Supplies:** books about the Feast of Booths*

Bring in Jewish books or information that explains the Jewish Feast of Booths or *Sukkot*. Have kids read Leviticus 23:37-40 as part of their research. Let the students share with the group any information they discover.

If you have branches available to gather, let the kids make a booth and sit inside it. Discuss what it would have been like to live in the booths for a week. Children who enjoy drawing could draw what they think it would have looked like. Other children who enjoy writing could create some journal entries from Israelite kids who lived in the booths.



12. Encourage Everyone

Comparing Lists (5-10 minutes)

This Bible activity compares the accounts of Israelites returning to Jerusalem from Nehemiah 11 to 1 Chronicles 9.

Divide the class into two groups. Assign one group to look at Nehemiah 11 and the other group should focus on 1 Chronicles 9. Have the kids compare the list of names and number of people listed. You or a child volunteer could write the numbers on the board for easy comparison. **Why do you think there might be discrepancies between the accounts?** Help the children understand that some factors may have been noted on one list and not on the other. Remind the group that these aren't errors that discredit the Bible, but simply a different ways of accounting.

Returner's Journal (10 minutes)

This creative writing activity explores what it would have been like to live in the newly reconstructed city of Jerusalem.

Have the students look over the list of people who returned to Jerusalem (Nehemiah 11: 3-36). Let each child choose one of the names from the list and write a journal entry or account of that person's return to the city. Students could write about what the journey to Jerusalem was like, what it was like to be in a new city, what job the person did in the city, and what things they saw, heard, or felt, etc.