

PRETEEN MINISTRY

4TH & 5TH GRADE



MARCH 8, 2026

THE PEOPLE WORSHIPED GOD

NEHEMIAH 7-13

CHRIST CONNECTION

God's people remembered all He had done, and they promised to be faithful. God is gracious and compassionate. **All along, God has been faithful to people who are unfaithful.** We experience God's grace and compassion in Jesus, who gave His life so we can receive mercy and life forever.

LEADER DEVO

The second half of the book of Nehemiah shows a remarkable rededication of the Israelites to God and His law. As Ezra read from the book of the Law, the people were confronted with their sin and overwhelmed by God's faithfulness toward them despite their unfaithfulness. Nehemiah 9 tells us that the people stood and listened to the book of the Law for many hours. As they listened, they were reminded of the history of God's people. They recognized their ancestors' sinful patterns of unfaithfulness to God's covenant, and yet God was always faithful. They heard that, amid their rebellion, God always called them back.

In Nehemiah 9:17, we are reminded of a description of God that is found throughout the Old Testament. Nehemiah 9:17 says, "But you are a forgiving God, gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in faithful love, and you did not abandon them." This description of God throughout the Old Testament reflected His unwavering commitment to Israel despite their repeated rebellion. Echoes of this description are found in Exodus 34, Psalm 103, and Jonah 4. As God's people declared this truth, they understood how God remained faithful to them, just as He had been faithful in the past. And because God's character is unchanging, His faithfulness remains true today.

One of the most beautiful descriptions of God in this passage is found in the word gracious. The Hebrew word used here conveys the idea of unmerited favor, such as a king stooping down to give favor to one of his subjects or an adult stooping down to comfort a child in need.

This concept of God's graciousness, however, finds its fullest expression in Jesus Christ coming to earth. Philippians 2 reminds us that Jesus did not consider equality with God something to be held on to; rather He descended to us. Jesus stooped down to our level to grant us something that we never deserved. Point kids to God's unchanging character and His faithfulness to His people. Help kids see how God's faithfulness to His people was a part of His gracious plan to send Jesus to into the world.

ARRIVAL

When kids arrive, they can play in the game room, Large Group room, or the balcony area. They can go between the areas as they want until Large Group starts. Leaders should be spread out in these areas to watch kids. Use this time to interact with kids and build relationships with them. Ask them about their week, big events coming up, or follow up on a prayer request from the week before.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY

THIS MONTH'S MEMORY VERSE

...but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

John 20:31



NEXT BIBLE BUCKS DAY

MAR 22

There are many techniques and tools to help kids (and you!) memorize Scripture.

THIS MONTH'S TOOL: DIY VERSE PUZZLE

Grab at least eight “puzzle pieces” (these can be Legos, blocks, index cards, etc.). On each of the puzzle pieces, write a part of the verse so that when all the pieces are put together in the correct order, you can see the entire verse.

Use this to practice memorizing the verse by putting it together, racing yourself, trying to fill in the gaps from memory, etc.

LESSON

After Ezra read the law, the people gathered together. They fasted, wore sackcloth, and put dust on their heads. They confessed their sins, read from the book of the law of the Lord, and worshiped all day. The Levites led the people in a prayer, saying:

“Blessed be your name, God. You are the only God. You created the heavens with all their stars, the earth and all that is in it, the seas and all that is in them.”

As they prayed, the people remembered how God chose Abram and changed his name to Abraham. God made a covenant with Abraham and gave the Promised Land to his descendants. God kept His promise because He is righteous.

The people also praised God for rescuing His people from slavery in Egypt. God parted the Red Sea and led His people by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. God came down to His people at Mount Sinai and gave them His good commands. All through their wilderness journey, God provided for His people and told them to go to the Promised Land. In the people’s prayer, they remembered how their ancestors did not obey God. Their ancestors made idols and forgot God’s works. But God did not leave them. He is forgiving, gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in faithful love.

God’s people prayed: “You gave our ancestors the land, giving them victory over the people who lived there. But they were disobedient and ignored your prophets. So, you handed them over to your enemies, who oppressed them. But in your compassion, you did not destroy or abandon your people.”

Then the people said, “Here we are today, slaves in the land you gave our ancestors. We are in trouble.” The people recognized they needed God, and so they promised to follow the law of God and to obey all His commands. Then the leaders and some of the people stayed in Jerusalem, and everyone else went to live in the nearby cities. Later, the people gathered to dedicate the wall around Jerusalem. They celebrated with music and gave thanks to God. Then God’s law was read to the people, and they were reminded to keep His commands.

CHRIST CONNECTION

God’s people remembered all He had done, and they promised to be faithful. God is gracious and compassionate. All along, God has been faithful to people who are unfaithful. We experience God’s grace and compassion in Jesus, who gave His life so we can receive mercy and life forever.

SMALL GROUPS

OUR GOAL

To create opportunities that invite preteens to discover for themselves what it means to own and live out their faith.

DISCUSSION / APPLICATION

1) What does it mean to “praise” God?

To express deep gratitude, adoration, and honor for God's character and mighty works.

2) The people thought back and remembered all the things God had done for them. Is it good for us to do the same? Why?

(See also Psalm 105:4-5)

3) What are some of the reasons God is worthy of our praise? (Try to have everyone in the group give at least one reason.)

4) What are some ways we can express our praise to God?

Singing, praying, dancing, art, journaling, etc.

We can praise God in many ways!

5) Take a moment and think about how you best/most want to praise God. How can you do that this week?

PICK UP

After small group, kids can play in the game room, Large Group room, or the balcony area. They can go between the areas as they want until they are picked up. Leaders should be spread out in these areas to watch kids.

Use this time to interact with kids and follow up on any questions or discussions from small group time.

As parents arrive upstairs, direct them to the game room, Large Group room, or balcony to pick their kids up. Make sure to match their security code with their kid's name tag and remove the name tag before they leave!

CLEAN UP

- Put away any supplies used during small group.
- Turn off TVs and lights in the small group rooms.
- Turn off both air hockey tables and put away extra pucks or paddles.
- Gather any balls or other items left out in the game room and put them away in the correct bins.
- Put away any games, books, or supplies in the balcony area.
- Check for any items left behind by kids and put them in the lost and found.

THANK YOU FOR SERVING!