

Ready for Launch: Boldly do what needs to be done

First, watch
this week's
video!

Initiative:
Seeing what
needs to be
done and
doing it

Memory Verse

"Work at everything you do with all your heart. Work as if you were working for the Lord."
Colossians 3:23a, NIV

Bible Story

Nehemiah Plans to Rebuild the Wall
Nehemiah 1:1–2:18

Key Question

What around you needs to be done?

Use this guide to help your family learn how God can help us show initiative.

Activity

Helping Hands

What You Need:

Lots of pieces of paper, scissors

What You Do:

Challenge your child to a "hand-off"! Take a sheet of paper for each member of your family. Without measuring, try to cut out an accurately sized handprint for each person in your family. You'll be cutting out a set, and your child will be cutting out a set. Don't forget to include your own hand, too!

While you're working, talk about the story. Say, "If you had been Nehemiah, what would you have done if your brother had told you that there was trouble in Jerusalem? Why do you think Nehemiah took the initiative to fix the wall? What did the wall do for the city? What might have happened if Nehemiah hadn't taken initiative?"

When you're finished cutting out a hand for every member of your family, line yours up beside the ones your child created. Which ones look the most accurate?

Finally, take the hands you cut out and measure them against everyone's actual hand. Who came the closest to everyone's actual hand size?

Say, "When it comes to taking initiative, it doesn't matter how big or small your hands are. Nehemiah was just a cupbearer. But he still saw what needed to be done and he did it."

Talk About the Bible Story

What job did Nehemiah discover that needed to be done? (*the wall in Jerusalem needed repairing; the people in Jerusalem needed help*)

Sometimes we ignore a job that needs to be done because it's not technically OUR responsibility—not OUR problem. Is there anything wrong with that way of thinking? Why or why not?

When you think of people who have shown initiative (*seeing what needs to be done and doing it*), who comes to mind? What do you appreciate or admire most about them? What can you learn from them?

What can you do if you see something that needs to be done, but you don't know what to do? How can you figure out where to start?

Parent: Share about a time when you saw something that needed to be done and took the initiative to do it. How did it make you feel?



Prayer

Use this prayer as a guide, either after talking about the Bible story or sometime before bed tonight:

"Dear God, just as Nehemiah came to You for help, we want to do the same. Help us to recognize opportunities to show initiative. When we see a need, help us not to make excuses to avoid helping out. Instead, remind us that EVERYTHING we do can be done for You. In Jesus' name we pray, amen."

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Bible Story

Nehemiah
Helps the Poor
Nehemiah 5

Key Question

Who do you see being treated unfairly?

Use this guide to help your family learn how God can help us show initiative.

Activity

Handy

What You Need:

Several socks, random items with distinguishable shapes (for example, spoon, marble, fork, paper clip, etc.—some should be very difficult to guess just by touch)

What You Do:

Place each item inside a sock. Tell your child, "Each sock has a different item in it. I want you to pick up each sock and see if you can guess what's inside. First, start by feeling from the outside with just one hand."

Give your child a chance to try to guess every object. The items they can't guess go into round two.

For round two, tell your child, "In this round, you can feel each item with both hands before you try to guess!"

Allow your child to try to guess again. The items they can't guess go into round three.

Say, "In this round, I'll give you multiple choices. Then, you can pick from those choices to guess what the mystery item is."

Give your child a few choices, making sure the actual item is one of the choices. If they still can't guess, do a big reveal! Then say, "See? Your hands can do some pretty incredible things when you take the initiative to use them."

Talk About the Bible Story

What problem did Nehemiah see as he was building the wall? (*People were in need, didn't have food to eat, and had to sell their land to buy food.*)

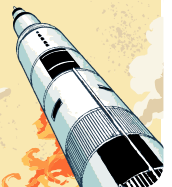
How were people being treated unfairly? (*Officials were charging them too much when they had to borrow money.*)

Did Nehemiah keep working on the wall and ignore the need he saw? (*No; he stopped working on the wall and helped.*)

We should treat others the way we want to be treated, but that's not always easy. When do you find it particularly difficult to stand up for someone? Why do you think it's hard?

When is it easier for you to step in and help make an unfair situation right?

Parent: Share about a time when you wanted to make things right, but you didn't. What happened as a result? What do you wish you'd done differently?



Prayer

Use this prayer as a guide, either after talking about the Bible story or sometime before bed tonight:

"Dear God, help us see ways this week that we can work to make things right. There are people all around us who are being treated unfairly because of the way they look, where they're from, how much money they have, or what they believe. We know that standing up for others is one way we can make things better, and it's one way we can show others the love You have for the world. So open our eyes to see what we need to see and do what we need to do. In Jesus' name, amen."

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Bible Story

Nehemiah and Sanballat
Nehemiah 2:19–20,
4, 6

Key Question

What distracts you from doing what needs to be done?

Use this guide to help your family learn how God can help us show initiative.

Activity

FOCUS!

What You Need:

No supplies needed

What You Do:

Say, "Everyone can get distracted from time to time. I'm going to give you some examples of different activities. I want you to tell me what might distract you from doing each activity."

Activities:

- Listening in class
- Reading a homework assignment
- Cleaning your room
- Memorizing a Bible verse
- Stepping out of your comfort zone and trying something new
- Praying
- Helping someone in your family

Ask, "If you know that you'll be easily distracted by something, what can you do to remind yourself to stay focused?"

Together with your child, come up with a funny saying or gesture you and your child can do when you're feeling distracted from an important task. The saying or gesture should remind both of you to stay focused on what needs to be done.

Talk About the Bible Story

What did Nehemiah do about the broken-down walls? (*He gathered the people in the city to rebuild the wall.*)

People from neighboring nations weren't happy about Jerusalem rebuilding the wall. Why? (*Because if the wall was rebuilt, the people living there could defend themselves again.*)

What did Nehemiah do when Sanballat and Tobiah laughed and made fun of the people as they worked on the wall? (*Nehemiah did not get upset. He kept working.*)

In your life right now, what would you say are the most important things for you to stay focused on?

Parent: Share about a time when you finished a BIG task. Maybe you completed a big home improvement project or finished a degree. Talk about the distractions along the way, and how you were able to stay focused so you could get the job done.

Prayer

Use this prayer as a guide, either after talking about the Bible story or sometime before bed tonight:

"Dear God, even when others tried to distract Nehemiah or when those around him were discouraged, Nehemiah stayed focused on what You wanted him to do. Help us to follow Nehemiah's example this week. When we start to get distracted by fears, problems, or [name some distractions your child mentioned earlier], remind us to ask for Your help. Amen."

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Bible Story

The Wall Is Rebuilt
Nehemiah 3-4,
6:15-16, 8:1-17

Key Question

What is God doing in your life that you can celebrate?

Activity

Praise Chain

What You Need:

Strips of paper, something to write with, tape

What You Do:

Say, "Let's think about some things God has done for us. Think about what He's done for you, for our family, and for our friends."

Write down as many things as you have time for. As you write each idea down on a strip of paper, create a paper chain by taping each link around the next.

When you have a decent-sized chain, find somewhere in the house to hang it. All week, add to the chain as you think about something new or different that God has done.

Say, "There's nothing too big or too small to celebrate when we remember what God has done for us. Let's keep the celebration going all week long by adding to our chain whenever we can."

Talk About the Bible Story

Why were Nehemiah and Israelites celebrating? (*God had helped them finish the city wall of Jerusalem.*)

What were the people remembering as they celebrated the Feast of Booths? (*They remembered how God took care of His people in the wilderness after He led them out of slavery in Egypt.*)

How has God helped our family?

What friends has God given you?

What has Jesus done for you that no one else could ever do?

What are some other things you know about God that you can praise or celebrate right now?

If we want to make a point of noticing what God has done and remembering to thank Him, what might help us do that?

When things don't turn out as we had hoped, why can we still celebrate? (*Brainstorm some creative ways you can celebrate what God has done.*)

Parent: Share about how you like to celebrate what God has done.

Prayer

Use this prayer as a guide, either after talking about the Bible story or sometime before bed tonight:

"Dear God, You deserve our praises every day! You care for us . . . You help us make wise choices . . . You answer our prayers . . . and You remind us of Your amazing power as we look at all that You've created. Best of all, You love us so much that You gave us Jesus! Thank You for making a way for us to be forgiven and to know You forever. Remind us often of the things we've learned this month from the life of Nehemiah. Help us take initiative by seeing what needs to be done and doing it. In Jesus' name, amen."