**September 19th, 2021: Elementary Grades Sunday School
NEHEMIAH Lesson 4: restoration to the poor** by Kristy Thornton

**AS KIDS ARRIVE: MATCH THE WORD TO THE DEFINITION (ACTIVTY Materials: printed worksheet, pencils, dictionary)
*The children will build their vocabulary by identifying the definition of words used in the fourth lesson of Nehemiah.*
WHAT YOU WILL SAY:** In today’s lesson, we have some vocabulary words that would be helpful to define and understand before starting the lesson. I will give you about 5 minutes to match the words to their definitions. You can use a dictionary if you would like.

After 5 minutes, review these words as a class. Discuss the meaning of each word.

Top of Form

Bottom of Form

**OPENING PRAYER AND PRAISE AND MEMORY WORK:**

**"He who gives to the poor will lack nothing." Proverbs 28:27 NIV**Read this verse and then search your heart and ask yourself if you really believe what it says.

God’s Word says he who gives lacks nothing. NOTHING. That is a pretty big statement. Do you really believe that if you give your food and your water, you will lack nothing not even food or water yourself? Why? *(Allow children to share.*) Today we are going to learn about greedy people, poor people, and giving people. Let’s read this verse one more time as a class.

 **SCRIPTURE READING AND DISCUSSION**

**Introduction:** We are going to continue reading about Nehemiah’s adventure in restoring Jerusalem. Last week we found out that the wall was completely restored despite the obstacles and mockers that stood in Nehemiah’s way. During this time, as Nehemiah was encouraging others to continue to rebuild the wall with him, he also had to address the greediness in the land.

**Read Nehemiah 5** *(As you read, feel free to stop at the vocabulary words used in the beginning activity to link prior knowledge and understanding.)*

**Discussion Questions:**
1. Why are the people upset?*(Their families are numerous, and it is difficult to feed all of them. They are mortgaging their property just to eat. They are borrowing money. Their sons and daughters are in slavery. They are powerless because others own all they have.)*
2. Who seems to be the enemy who owns the property and slaves? *(Their own people, fellow citizens. Most likely, they are Jewish people who became wealthy in exile or established their own wealth.)*
3. How do their actions reveal their hearts?*(Allow children to respond. They are not trusting in God’s provision. They are not giving; they do not believe that they will lack nothing. They are being greedy asking for an additional amount in which they do not need.)*
4. Is it right that these people take advantage of others by charging them extra and enslaving their children? *(Allow children to answer.)*
5. How does Nehemiah respond to all the outcries? *(He is very angry. He goes directly to the nobles and officials to tell them that they are behaving in an unjust manner.)*
6. How do you think God feels as He watches His People who escaped from slavery return to be enslaved by their own people?*(Allow children to answer.)*
7. Is the problem resolved? If so, how? *(Yes. Nehemiah reminds them to walk in fear of God in order to avoid His reproach. The nobles quit charging interest and return what they took.)*
8. Nehemiah makes the nobles and officials take an oath. Do you think they will keep their promise? What will happen to them if they don’t? *(Allow children to answer. If they do not keep their oath, they will be shaken out and emptied by God just as Nehemiah shook out the folds in his robe.)*
9. In verse 5:10, Nehemiah says that he and his men are lending people money and grain without a surplus charge. Do you think because Nehemiah and his men gave to the poor that they lack nothing? Why? *(Allow children to respond.)*
10. What evidence from the passage can you find that displays Nehemiah’s ability to be a good leader and example to his people? *(Answers may vary. He heard the people’s outcry. He responded quickly. He, himself, gave and lead by example. He worked alongside his people on the wall. He devoted himself to finish what God called him to do.)*

 **CLASS EXERCISE: CARE PACKAGE FOR THE POOR (Activity Materials: gallon ziploc bags, case of water, granola bars, toothbrush, toothpaste, shampoo, deodorant, soap, disposable razor, etc.)**

**PREPARATION:** Gather all the items that you would like to put in the care bags. You can ask for donations or purchase items. You do not need all the items listed. You can add to the list as well.

**WHAT YOU WILL DO:** Have an assembly line for the kids to take one of each item and place it in a Ziplock bag.

**WHAT YOU WILL SAY:** We have the privilege of making care package for the homeless today. By working together, we can make a small difference in the lives of others. Each care package will have a water, granola bars, toothbrush, toothpaste, travel size shampoo, deodorant, soap, disposable razor, etc.

You can take your care package with you. If you have a car, you can ask your parents to keep the care package in the car to give to a homeless person on the street when you see one. *(Optional: You can organize all these care packages to be given to a homeless shelter or agency that works with the homeless.)*

**APPLICATION:** Nehemiah continues to show great leadership by not just telling people what to do but showing them how to do it. He gave money and grain without interest. He opened his hand and his heart to be used by God. He continued to work on the wall staying focused on what God had called him to do.

**"And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it." 1 Corinthians 12:26 KJV**

How does Nehemiah show that he suffers with the impoverished? Do you feel that you suffer when a member of your family suffers? Do you rejoice when something good happens to a member of your family? God didn’t like the fact that some of His people were hurting and poor due to the greediness of their own kind. God wants us to love others as we love ourselves.

 **CLOSING PRAYER**

**What we learned:** Today, your child learned that God provides for those who give to the poor. Your child saw that Nehemiah continued to be a great leader for the Jews as he lent out food and money, rebuked corrupt practices, and continued to work on the wall. (Scripture used: Nehemiah 5)

**Memory Verse:** "He who gives to the poor will lack nothing." Proverbs 28:27 NIV Practice this verse several times with your child during the week. This will help your child remember the verse and it will help to reinforce what he or she learned during class.

**Suggested Parent/Child Activity:** Together as a family read Nehemiah 5. After reading this passage, identify people in need around you. Discuss different ways that you can help those in need in your own family or even the homeless. Make a plan of action to help them. You can even continue to make care packages for the homeless as a family.

**Daily Prayer:** Dear Lord, thank You for being a giving God. You are the provider of all things. Thank You for all that You have given me and my family. Give me a generous heart for the poor and needy. Amen.