



# Authorised Mess — NAHUM

## Your details

Name: Denise Yeadon

Church: Kingswood Methodist Church

Bible book	Nahum
Theme of session	<p>The main theme is 'warnings' and includes: who to beware of, who to trust in, the need to listen and learn (prophecy), and how one person's warning is another person's comfort. You could also have a theme of 'Do not be afraid' or 'Our God reigns'. It could simply be called 'Messy Nahum' or 'Messy World', 'Messy Power' or even 'Messy Saints'. There is a Saint Nahum day in Eastern Christianity, which is celebrated on 1 or 14 December, which is probably not a time you would want to do Nahum, but around All Saints Day might be good.</p>
Notes	<p>The book is about the end of the Assyrian Empire and its capital city Nineveh (in modern-day Iraq). Nineveh was affluent with palaces and vast libraries, and was the centre of commerce and civilisation. It was mighty with high, wide walls around it and a deep, wide moat. It was strong, secure and mighty. The Assyrians were the curse of the Middle East—they wanted world domination; they thought they were invincible.</p> <p>At first, Nahum seems a depressing book—the story of Jonah without any good news at the end. The word Nahum means 'comforter' and although his message seems bad news—the city of Nineveh will be destroyed—it was good news and a comfort to the people Assyria were oppressing. The message was for Judah, a message of release from oppression. Nineveh had a warning from Jonah that it was going to be destroyed, but the repentance at the end of Jonah was short lived and so Nahum speaks of its destruction, followed by Zephaniah. Eventually, the city fell four decades after Nahum was believed to have been written. The impregnable city was believed to have fallen when flood waters breached her walls, allowing the attacking army to enter.</p> <p>So the messages of Nahum which are still relevant today are: to free people from the paralysis of world problems and get them to believe and pray to a sovereign God; don't admire or be intimidated by the enemy; and God is slow to anger but will not let people get away with wrong.</p>



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Categories of activities to get a mix	Activity name	Instructions	Resources needed	Reason for doing this activity
Younger participants	Sandcastle building	Build sandcastles and knock them down.	Sand pit, sand, buckets.	Nineveh fell when water knocked the walls down, like a sandcastle. Can relate it to building on rock and sand, God or own strength.
Younger participants	Hide and seek lion	Use a cuddly lion to play hide and seek.	Cuddly lion.	Nahum uses a simile of Nineveh being like a lion hiding in its den (Nahum 2:11–12) when it doesn't have to be powerful.
Younger participants	Sleeping lions	Lie still without moving. The winner is the last one to move.	None.	Again, about lions not being powerful all the time—even they have to sleep. Also about patience, waiting for God to help.
Younger participants	Skittles	Knock the skittles down with the balls.	Skittles or similar, balls.	Nineveh fell easily like skittles. You could have a rule of three turns and see how many skittles are knocked down, like Nineveh had three warnings.



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Older participants	Who's the strongest?	Perform strength/stamina tests using the resources available. NB: Someone with training or knowledge of safety in exercise should manage this for safety reasons.	Weights, old fairground hammer and bell ringer, exercise bike, rowing machine or similar.	Real strength is not just about being physically strong like Nineveh. Can relate to issues of bullying—are bullies really strong or weak. When exercising, care needed so do not harm oneself—being too powerful can be dangerous, as it was for Nineveh.
Older participants	Newspaper tower	See who can make the strongest tower out of newspaper and tape to support a Bible. Suggest rolling the newspaper to make it stronger.	Newspapers, tape, Bible.	Just like Judah, even something that seems weak (newspaper) can be made stronger. God's word can show how strong or weak we are.
Older participants	Battleships	Play the game.	Battleship game.	Battles are a way of the world and there are always winners and losers. What does it feel like to win and to lose?
Older participants	Nineveh News/Judah Journal	Make a newspaper about the collapse of Nineveh with headlines from both the perspective of those in Nineveh and Judah.	Paper, pens (or could use a computer).	Wars are still in the news and newspapers are not always neutral. They could support either side, but there are two sides to every war.



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Girls	Mouse duvet	Make a little duvet for a mouse by sewing or simply cutting out and decorating material. For those who want to sew, you could teach them how to do blanket stitch, if not known.	Furry or soft material, sewing needles and thread, glue and decorative bits.	Nahum means 'comfort' and he brought comfort to the people of Judah who were as small and weak as a mouse and needed caring for. Yet elephants are scared of mice. Small things can be powerful.
Boys	Name shield	Paint or stick your name on the shield, and what you like or think is important.	Card, shield template, pens, paint, glue, letters, book of meanings of names.	Nahum's name showed what he was like, what was important to him. What does your name mean? What are you like? What is important to you?
Word-based	Praise alphabet	Write a word about God beginning with each letter of the alphabet. Can be done individually or as a whole group activity.	Paper (A4 or large sheet), pens, dictionary (optional).	Nahum 1:2–8 is a partial alphabet praise of God's power.
Word-based	Prayer wall	Write prayers for people in the brick spaces of the paper wall.	Large sheet of paper, brick wall template (made or printed from Internet), felt tip pens.	Like Judah, people need God's help. Seven days without prayer makes one 'weak'.



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Food-based	Rocky road buns	Follow the recipe to make individual buns, which set quicker.	Chocolate, biscuits, mini marshmallows and other ingredients of your choice. Bun cases, bowls, spoons, rolling pin for smashing biscuits. Microwave to melt chocolate. Recipe from Internet, for example: <a href="http://allrecipes.co.uk/recipe/8756/easy-rocky-road.aspx">http://allrecipes.co.uk/recipe/8756/easy-rocky-road.aspx</a> .	Things that are damaged and broken, like Judah, can be made into something good. Chocolate is comfort food, cheers us up.
Explores global aspect of faith	Fairtrade football	Play football with unequal goal posts: narrower for a western country (US/UK) so harder for a developing country (India, for example) to score. If space is limited, play using a ball and basket: score by getting the ball in the basket. Here, India, for example, should have a larger ball, smaller basket and further to throw, while USA/UK should have a smaller ball, larger basket and not so far to throw.	Goal posts or waste paper baskets, balls.	To show that countries still oppress others, like Nineveh did, and want world dominance, not just in war but in trade. Suggest that we, the West/UK, may be Nineveh in the story. Do we need to listen to any warnings?



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Opens up great art	Weather forecast	Make weather forecast symbols (cloud, rain, snow, sun, fog and so on) from your choice of medium.	Card, paper, all different types of craft material (for example, cellophane, cotton wool, paint, netting), scissors.	The people of Nineveh worshipped gods of nature. Weather forecasts are warnings, like a prophecy, telling us what is going to happen. We have no control over the weather and have to trust the forecasts.
Quiet	Comfort tent	Create a comfort tent with cuddly toys, books, relaxing music playing, cushions and so on.	Tent, cushions, music, cuddly toys, books.	God is our shelter and, like a tent, protects us. We need safe spaces to relax and to find comfort. We need to take time out, to renew our strength.
Really messy	Water fight	Have a water fight, probably outside!	Water pistols, water bombs, protective clothing.	Nineveh was destroyed by water. We need protection to keep us safe and dry.
Really messy	Bath gel	Turn a bowl of water red using bath gel and then turn it back to clear.	Bowl, water, red colour changing bath gel.	Nineveh scared Judah by using clothes rolled in blood—they would be hurt, bleed (Nahum 2:3) But God would wash out the stains.
Really messy	Snail race	Race the snails.	Snails, board with start and finish marked, tables.	God may be slow to anger but he will act.



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## Celebration suggestion

Bad news/good news: Who has any good news to share? Have prayers of thanks.

Play a game of good news/bad news by giving some news and asking if what you say is good news or bad news. Here are some examples to get you started but remember there has to be two sides to looking at it:

- ✿ It is going to rain today (some like rain, gardens need it, can spoil playing out).
- ✿ You have to go to bed at 6 o'clock tonight (too early, miss favourite TV programme, need enough sleep)
- ✿ You can eat as much chocolate as you want (enjoy yourself, like chocolate, make you sick)
- ✿ Your daddy/mummy loses their job (not have enough money, cutbacks, but more time with them)

Sometimes it is hard to tell what is good news and what is bad. Nahum had some bad news and some good news—bad news for Nineveh, but good news for Judah (can refer to the newspaper Nineveh News or Judah Journal made in the activity): Nineveh is going to be destroyed. It is not nice when someone is going to be hurt, but the people of Nineveh had been nasty to other countries and even though God warned them three times to behave themselves and stop being nasty they didn't. But it's good news for Judah because they will stop being bullied and hurt.

Think about places or people who need help and pray for them using the prayer wall made in the activity. You could put a blanket over it as a sign of God comforting them.

Alternatively, use any bully stories you know and emphasise how the situation was resolved.

## Song ideas

- ✿ 'Our God is a great big God'.
- ✿ 'Our God is so big'.
- ✿ 'Our God reigns'.
- ✿ 'God is good we sing and shout it'.

## Meal suggestion

- ✿ Any power food like spinach or pasta or beans, or comfort food like a stew.
- ✿ Good old fashioned pudding or rocky road buns (made in the activity, both comfort food).



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## Faith in Homes suggestion

- ✿ Talk about behaviour—warnings and consequences.
- ✿ Talk about safety in the home—make a fire escape plan.
- ✿ Talk about safe spaces—touching, strangers.
- ✿ Have a duvet day:
  - Watch a movie like Shrek and talk about what is good/bad. What are monsters?
  - Have some family massage time and talk about safe touch.
  - Read a book, for example, *Some Things Are Scary* by Florence Parry Heide (2011, Candlewick Press) and talk about how we all get scared and how we deal with it.

## Primary School RE idea

- ✿ Behaviour policy.
- ✿ Safe spaces.
- ✿ Bullying.