



# Authorised Mess — NEHEMIAH

## Your details

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Church: St Mary's Messy Church, Grassendale, Liverpool

Bible book	Nehemiah
Theme of session	If we have God in our lives, he will support us and keep us strong.
Notes	

## Session details

Categories of activities to get a mix	Activity name	Instructions	Resources needed	Reason for doing this activity
Younger participants	Den building/Dressing up	Dress up in hard hat and hi-vis jacket, and use materials to build your own tent/den.	Blankets, sheets, curtains, pegs/clips, chairs, tables, clothes rails, hard hats, hi-vis jackets.	The Israelites built shelters to live in happily while they listened to the teachings of God (Nehemiah 8:13–18).
Older participants	Wooden 'sheep gate'	Build a big wooden gate together.	Strong wooden table, wooden frame, pieces of wood, hammer, nails, First Aid Box!	Not only was the wall of Jerusalem broken but the gates had been burned and needed rebuilding (Nehemiah 2:13).
Girls	King's cup	Decorate a glass tumbler fit for a king.	Glass tumblers, glass paints, glass writing pens, thin paint brushes, various stickers, gem stones.	Nehemiah had a very trustworthy job before returning to Jerusalem. He was the king's official taster (Nehemiah 2:1).



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Boys	Swords on belts	Make a sword and belt from the silver card. Decorate and then tape the sword to the belt to wear at Messy Church.	Sword template, belt template, strong silver card, scissors, sticky tabs, sequins, stickers, hole punch, string/ribbon.	Some people were against Nehemiah and his men working on the wall, so they protected themselves with a sword in one hand and building tools in another (Nehemiah 4:13).
Word-based	Messy family tree	Draw/paint/write your family and place on the Messy family tree.	Chubby wax crayons, felt tip pens, colouring pencils, pencils, paper, paints, paint brushes, glue sticks, large tree cut-out.	Nehemiah found registers of families to invite back to Jerusalem (Nehemiah 7:4–73). Everyone at Messy Church is part of God's family.
Food-based	'Fish gate' cakes	Decorate a fairy cake with blue icing and roll a fish shape out of royal icing to put on top.	Fairy cakes, icing sugar, blue food colouring, ready-made royal icing.	All of the gates in the wall of Jerusalem had names. Remember the Fish Gate by making a 'fish gate' cake.
Explores global aspect of faith	Wall of Jerusalem	Write a prayer about struggling cities in the world today on one of the brick spaces in the wall.	Brick wall template (made or printed from Internet), felt tip pens.	There are many cities in many countries around the world today who struggle through war, riot and natural disasters. Nehemiah achieved so much by constantly praying to God.



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Opens up great art	Cityscape	Become an architect for the day and design a building or landmark to add to the city outline drawn on lining paper.	Small pieces of paper, chubby wax crayons, felt tip pens, colouring pencils, pencils, glue sticks or Blu-Tack, city outline/skyline, lining paper.	An opportunity to be creative and imaginative.
Messy	Bricklaying	Build a real brick wall like Nehemiah.	Groundsheet, washing-up bowls, towels, sand (4 cup measure), cement (1 cup measure), a squirt of washing-up liquid, water, shovel, bricks, trowels, spirit level.	It took Nehemiah and his men 52 days to complete the rebuilding of the wall (Nehemiah 6:15). How difficult is it to learn a new skill?
Really messy	Making bricks	Take your shoes and socks off and tread down the brick mixture. Then fill a container to make your own brick. Put the lid on and take home to dry out.	Paddling pool; a mixture of soil, sand and clay; washing-up bowls of soapy water; towels; take-away trays and lids; labels for lids with printed verses from Psalm 122:6,7.	A reminder to pray for peace in Jerusalem and other places in the world.

## Celebration suggestion

Show photographs of everyone engaging in the Nehemiah crafts. Choose a couple of the photos to re-emphasise the general theme.

## Retelling of the story

Tell the story of Nehemiah. Here is a retelling adapted from [www.missionarlington.org/d/OT-2YR-78-Nehemiah.pdf](http://www.missionarlington.org/d/OT-2YR-78-Nehemiah.pdf).



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Nehemiah (knee-a-my-a) was a man that helped the king. He tasted the king's drink to make sure no one poisoned it. He was called a cupbearer. He was a very trusted man. The king liked Nehemiah and cared for him.

One day, Nehemiah's brother told him some sad news. He discovered that the walls of his home town (Jerusalem) were broken and had not been repaired. This troubled Nehemiah. He cried and prayed for several days. He had such a love for his beautiful city; he couldn't bear to see it in ruins.

The next day, Nehemiah served the king his drink. The king immediately noticed that Nehemiah was upset. He asked him what was wrong. Nehemiah quickly prayed and then told the king and queen of his sadness. Then he boldly asked the king if he could go rebuild the city wall. After some talk, they agreed.

Nehemiah set out quickly. But he was very careful about the things he did. In fact, when he got to Jerusalem, he kept his plans a secret. First, he went at night to look at the broken down wall. He rode a horse around the city and inspected it. Then, he told the people. He shared how God had answered his prayers and how the king let him come to help. Everyone was excited. They wanted to start rebuilding the wall right away. However, some people didn't like this plan. They asked lots of questions. What was Nehemiah's answer—'We are God's servants. We will start rebuilding.' He knew that God was helping them rebuild the wall. He wasn't going to let someone discourage them or stop the building.

Nehemiah trusted God. He knew that God had answered his prayers. The wall was built faster than anyone could imagine! They finished the wall in 52 days!!! When the wall was complete, Nehemiah and Ezra helped the people worship God. They took time to read the Bible and obey God. It was a very special time.

Invite everyone to dress up in hard hats and hi-vis jackets. Instruct them to build a wall as a tall thin tower (use church kneelers/large pre-school building blocks/Lego and so on) - this will topple over. Now ask the same builders to rebuild the wall horizontally - as they did in the bricklaying activity. What is the difference between the two walls? Our lives are like a wall. If we have God in our lives, he will support us and keep us strong. If we don't have God in our lives, our lives could topple over like the first wall.

**Song:** Sing the following song 'Nehemiah, he can fix it!' to the tune of 'Bob the Builder'. Adults sing the first line of the chorus, then the children sing the next line, and similarly for the third and fourth lines. Everyone sings the two verses.



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Nehemiah  
Can he fix it?  
Nehemiah  
Yes, he can!

Nehemiah  
Can he fix it?  
Nehemiah  
Yes, he can!

In the dark of night with just a few men  
He looked at the walls of Jerusalem  
They were broken and wrecked and the gates were down  
But by working together, they'll get the job done.

Nehemiah  
Can he fix it?  
Nehemiah  
Yes, he can!

Nehemiah  
Can he fix it?  
Nehemiah  
Yes, he can!

Time to get busy, such a lot to do  
Building and fixing till it's good as new  
God will protect them and the soldiers guard  
Rolling up their sleeves and working hard.



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Nehemiah  
Can he fix it?  
Nehemiah  
Yes, he can

Nehemiah  
Can he fix it?  
Nehemiah  
Yes, he can!

## Prayer

Lord, thank you that you are always there for us, that we can attempt great things with your help, and that we are all part of your loving family. We pray that everyone in Messy Churches around the world will come to have faith like Nehemiah. Amen.

## Messy Grace (with actions)

## Meal suggestion

- ✿ Fish fingers, chips, bread & butter.
- ✿ Fish gate cakes (made in the activity).

## Faith in Homes suggestion

Place your 'take-away' brick somewhere in the home to remind you of Nehemiah and all he achieved through prayer. When you listen/watch the news and hear about struggling cities, hold the brick and say a prayer about God healing the hurting cities.

## Primary School RE idea

KS1:

- ✿ Prayer brick wall for display.
- ✿ Drama retelling of the story.
- ✿ Nehemiah/building site role-play area.



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- ✿ Making a brick wall around the classroom together. How many bricks will we need? How long will it take? (Emphasise teamwork and links to maths.)

## KS2:

- ✿ Nehemiah's diary.
- ✿ Freeze-frame drama activity using speech bubbles—take photos and make into a cartoon strip.
- ✿ Graffiti prayer wall.