

FAMILY DEVOTIONAL

NOVEMBER 1, 2020

NEHEMIAH (GOD'S PEOPLE REPENTED)

First, read the story summary on the next page as a family.
(From Nehemiah 8-13)

After reading, discuss these questions:

1. How did the people respond when they heard God's words? (Neh. 8:9)
2. What did Ezra tell the people to do when they got home? (Neh. 8:10)
3. Why do you think the people responded to the Word of God by crying?
4. Why did God want the people to celebrate instead?
5. What can you do when you realize that you have sinned?

When Ezra read the Word of God to the people it was as if he was holding up a mirror for all the people. As they listened to the laws that God had given to His people, they realized they had disobeyed God. Their sin made them very sad. But God's people repented and promised to be faithful! When we sin, we can repent and confess our sin to God. And just like the Israelites celebrated God's faithfulness, we can celebrate because God has shown us mercy and grace!

Game:

The third page of this devotional will have a list of 30 different words. (You can also make up your own list of 30 words.) Give each person in your family a pencil and paper. Read the list aloud once; then wait 30 seconds and read it a second time. Give everyone 1 minute to write down as many of the words as they can remember. When time is up, see who remembered the most words.

Then talk about how Ezra read God's Word to the people after the walls were finished. God wanted His people to listen to His Word and remember it. God's Word has the power to change our lives in amazing ways, so it's a good thing to hear and remember!

Art Option:

Give each person a piece of paper and invite them to draw pictures of your family's traditions for celebrating different holidays or accomplishments. (Christmas, Easter, the Fourth of July, birthdays, first/last day of school, good report card, and so forth)

Then talk about how every family has different traditions for celebrating special days. In today's Bible story, the people of Jerusalem celebrated when the walls and city gates were finished. They celebrated by listening to the Scriptures and having a big feast. They were not only excited that the walls were finished, they were excited that they understood God's words!

God's People Repented

Nehemiah 8-13

The walls around Jerusalem were finished—at last! With God’s help, the people finished rebuilding the walls and the city gates in just 52 days. All the people in Jerusalem gathered together early in the morning at one of the city gates. Men, women, and children—anyone who could understand—came to listen to the reading of God’s Word.

As the sun was just coming up, Ezra (EZ ruh) the priest brought out the book of the law of Moses that God had given to His people. God’s words were written on a scroll. Ezra stood on a high wooden platform and began to read.

Ezra read the law for hours, and all the people listened carefully. The people stood up; they had respect for God’s Word. Ezra praised God, and the people lifted up their hands.

“Amen! Amen!” they said. The people in the crowd bowed down with their faces to the ground, and they worshiped God.

Some of the leaders there—the Levites (LEE vights)—explained the law to the people and helped them understand the words Ezra read. As the people heard the words of the law, they began to cry.

The law was God’s rules for living, and the people had disobeyed God. They realized they had sinned. Ezra, the Levites, and Nehemiah (nee huh MIGH uh) the governor said, “This day is holy to the Lord your God. Do not be sad or cry.” Even though the people’s sin made them sad, this was a happy day.

Then Ezra said to them, “Go home and prepare a feast! Eat rich food and drink sweet drinks. Share what you have prepared with those who have nothing prepared.” And again Ezra said, “Today is holy to the Lord our God. This is not a day to be sad because the joy of the Lord is your strength.”

The people obeyed Ezra. They prepared a feast. They were glad because they understood the words of the law that were explained to them. Nehemiah led God’s people to repent and confess their sin. They agreed to worship only God and promised to obey Him.

Word List

1. Giraffe
2. Truck
3. Stew
4. Plane
5. Cracker
6. Thunder
7. Stage
8. Tomato
9. Toothbrush
10. Rice
11. Judge
12. Tent
13. Couch
14. Snake
15. Friend
16. Lock
17. Doll
18. Crab
19. Receipt
20. Cactus
21. Rope
22. Ticket
23. Basketball
24. Crown
25. Umbrella
26. Ocean
27. Pencil
28. Snail
29. Newspaper
30. Elevator