



UNIT 18 | SESSION 4

THE PEOPLE PROMISED TO BE FAITHFUL

NEHEMIAH 9–10

KEY PASSAGE:

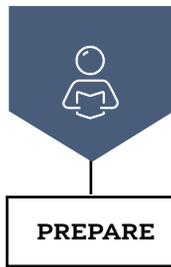
2 Corinthians 7:10

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

How should we feel when we sin? When we sin, we should feel sorry that we have disobeyed God and want to turn from our sin because we love Him.

CHRIST CONNECTION:

God's people remembered all He had done and promised to be faithful. God is gracious and compassionate. All along, God has been faithful to people who are unfaithful. We experience God's grace and compassion in Jesus, who gave His life so we can receive mercy and life forever.



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION



LEADER Bible Study

What comes to mind when you think about confession? Do you think of sadness? Weeping and guilt? Shame and failure? What about worship?

When was the last time you came before God in true confession? What led to your admission of failure before a holy God?

The Bible is clear that “God’s kindness is intended to lead you to repentance” (Rom. 2:4). But what does the Bible say about what confession should look like? What does the Bible say should lead us to confession?

Nehemiah 9 gives insight in how to answer that question. God’s people had gathered and were fasting and beginning to confess their sin when the priests chimed in with an appropriate pattern for how that confession ought to progress.

In this text, we discover that true confession of sin will never come before genuine recognition of the holiness of God. God’s people had promised to be faithful, but following their return from exile, the men of Israel intermarried with foreign women. They were unfaithful to God, disobeying His commands. Yet God remained faithful.

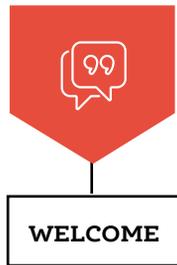
The pattern of the priests is to first recognize, exclaim, and celebrate God’s goodness, faithfulness, holiness, and righteousness. Only out of those comes the

reason for confession. For it is only when we see the majesty of the holy God that we see the weight of our sin and the punishment due to us as a result. Then, and only then, will we be drawn to the altar of honest confession before God. Yes, conviction must come, but it will only come when there is first an awareness of the greatness of God.

Set aside time to intentionally approach God to confess the sin in your life. Remember this pattern. That God wants your eyes fixed firmly on Him, even in moments of reflection and confession. For the moment we lose sight of Him is the moment we negate the gravity of our sin and the necessity of confession.

TERMS TO KNOW

Faithfulness: being true to one’s word or commitments as to what one has pledged to do, professes to believe, and so on.



WELCOME Kids

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

SAY “What are some ways you can tell what kind of character a person has? By their actions? By the way they talk?”

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “God Is Faithful” on the activity page.

SAY “Sometimes we make promises and don’t always keep them. But God is always faithful to His promises. In our Bible story today, we will learn how God was faithful to His people even when they broke their promises to be faithful to Him.”

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: REMEMBER



Form groups of three or four kids. Provide each group with a piece of paper and a pencil. Challenge each group to recall as many Old Testament Bible stories as they can and write them on the piece of paper in five minutes. At the end of five minutes, review the Bible stories from each team.

Challenge each team again by asking them to think about how God was faithful in each of the Bible stories they wrote down. Lead kids to think about ways the people’s disobedience didn’t stop God from being faithful to them.

SAY “God’s people (and we) have never been able to faithfully obey Him. But that never stopped God from continuing to be faithful. God cannot be anything but faithful because His faithfulness is directly tied to His character and truthfulness. Let’s read our Bible story to learn more about God’s faithfulness.”

OPTION 2: FORGETFUL

Before meeting together, gather 20 small objects (paperclip, pencil, sticker, pony bead, etc.) and place them on a tray. Form the kids into two teams and provide each team with a piece of paper and a pencil.

Display the objects and allow the kids to review them for 30 seconds. Challenge kids to use the 30 seconds to memorize as many objects as they can. When time is up, direct each team to write down as many objects as they can remember. Review the teams’ answers and count up how many they got correct.

Play again as time allows. The team with the most correct objects wins.

SAY “We can easily forget objects we just saw within 30 seconds. We can also forget God’s Word and choose to disobey it. But God never forgets. He doesn’t forget us or His promises. In today’s Bible story, we will learn about God’s faithfulness.”

Transition from **WELCOME** to **LEARN**





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

INTRODUCE the Bible Story

1 INTRODUCE THE SESSION (3 minutes)

Show the countdown video as you transition to introduce the Bible story. Set it to end as the session begins.

SAY “ Hi kids! I’m so glad you’re here today! My name is **[your name]**, and today I am excited to share a story from God’s Word with you. If you have a Bible with you today, will you hold it up? **[Distribute Bibles to kids who don’t have one.]**

When we study the Bible, we not only get to learn amazingly true stories, but we get to learn more about who God is. God revealed His character through the way He worked in the lives of His people. God is always faithful, even when we are not. Today, we will learn how the people of God remembered His faithfulness and promised to be faithful to Him. ”

2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

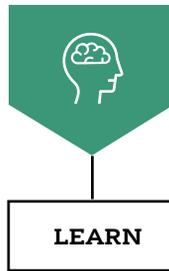
SAY “ Does anyone remember the big picture question we have been discussing? **[Allow kids to respond.]** Our big picture question and answer is, **How should we feel when we sin? When we sin, we should feel sorry that we have disobeyed God and want to turn from our sin because we love Him.**

Today, we will see how God uses His Word to show us our sin and our need for a Savior—Jesus. God’s people responded to His faithfulness by confessing their sin and promising to be faithful to Him. They were sorry for their sin and wanted to turn away from sin and turn to God. ”

3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

Show the giant timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

SAY “ God is faithful to His people because He does not lie and will always fulfill His promises. God was faithful to save His people from the evil plot of Haman. He was faithful to help Nehemiah rebuild the walls around Jerusalem. God was faithful to send Ezra to read the law to His people and reveal their sin. And God showed His faithfulness in today’s Bible story by helping the people of Judah remember all that He had done for them. ”



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LEARN the Bible Story

1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY: VIDEO OR STORYTELLER (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Nehemiah 9–10. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “The People Promised to Be Faithful.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

THE PEOPLE PROMISED TO BE FAITHFUL

“**God’s people had returned from exile in Babylon and set up their homes in Judah. Nehemiah led God’s people in Jerusalem to repent and confess their sin.** To show they were sorry for their sin, the people fasted. They wore sackcloth and put dust on their heads. **They spent time reading and listening to God’s Word, confessing their sin, and worshipping the Lord.**

Leaders stood and led God’s people in prayer: “Blessed be the LORD your God forever and ever,” they prayed. “You, LORD, are the only God. You created the heavens and the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to all of them, and all the stars of heaven worship You.”

They remembered everything God had done in Israel’s past, praying, “You chose Abram and changed his name to Abraham. You made a covenant with him and gave him the promised land. You kept Your promise, for You are righteous.”

They also remembered how God had seen the Israelites’ suffering in Egypt and delivered them, dividing the Red Sea for them to cross. He led them with a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. **He gave them His law on Mount Sinai. He gave them bread and water in the wilderness. But the people had turned away from God.** They worshiped idols and did not trust Him. **Yet God was forgiving, gracious, and compassionate. He did not abandon them.**

In their praise to God, **they also remembered how God gave His people kingdoms and multiplied them.** They were successful and happy. **But the people turned away from God. The people thought back to when God sent prophets to warn them, but they did not listen. God let their enemies take over, but He did not destroy or abandon them because God is gracious and compassionate.**

The leaders prayed, “Now today we are slaves in the land You gave our ancestors. We need help! So we promise to be faithful and worship only You.” The people agreed to follow God’s law.

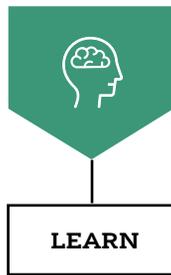
Then the leaders and some of the people stayed in Jerusalem, and everyone else went to live in the cities nearby.

Christ Connection: God’s people remembered all He had done and promised to be faithful. God is gracious and compassionate. All along, God has been faithful to people who are unfaithful. We experience God’s grace and compassion in Jesus, who gave His life so we can receive mercy and life forever. ”

STORYTELLING TIPS

Display Bible posters: Display posters of several previously studied stories to help kids remember the different ways God demonstrated His faithfulness. Point to pictures of the stories that are mentioned in Nehemiah 9–10 as you tell today’s story.

Write down God’s attributes: Instruct kids to write down God’s attributes as they hear them mentioned in the story. Provide kids with paper and pencil. Review all of the attributes they wrote down.



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY “ God’s people had a constant struggle with sin. They disobeyed God’s law and worshiped false gods. But God remained faithful to His people. God’s people often had to suffer the consequences of their sins, but God always heard their cries and was gracious toward them.

After reading God’s law, what did God’s people do? Look at Nehemiah 9:3. [Choose a volunteer to read aloud Nehemiah 9:3.] After the people read and heard God’s law, they realized the seriousness of their sin and confessed it to the Lord. They also responded by crying out to the Lord and worshipping Him for His faithfulness and mercy.

Sometimes the sins of God’s people caused them to suffer. Was God being unfair or unkind in causing His people to fall into the hand of their enemies because of their disobedience? Look at Nehemiah 9:33. [Choose a volunteer to read aloud Nehemiah 9:33.] No! God is righteous. This means He always does what is right and good. And God was faithful even when His people disobeyed. Sin has consequences, but God, because of His great mercy and grace, provides a way for His people to be forgiven. He provided a way for His people to be delivered from their enemies and He provided a way for us to be saved from sin and death through His Son, Jesus. ”

3 CHRIST CONNECTION

SAY “ God’s people remembered all He had done and promised to be faithful. God is gracious and compassionate. All along, God has been faithful to people who are unfaithful. We experience God’s grace and compassion in Jesus, who gave His life so we can receive mercy and life forever. ”

(Tip: Use Scripture and the Gospel Plan Poster to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.)

4 QUESTIONS FROM KIDS (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 18, Session 4” questions from kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

1. What if we still feel bad after asking forgiveness for sin? Is there anything else we need to do?
2. God is always faithful to His people. How has God been faithful to you?

5 MISSIONS MOMENT (3 minutes)

Display a world map and point to the area of Southeast Asia. Emphasize that sometimes missionaries face difficult situations in the places they serve, but they continue their work and trust God to help them. Point out that during the pandemic and government unrest, many missionaries serving in Southeast Asia could not leave their areas because they would be required to quarantine for two weeks in a government-run hospital when they returned. Other people also could not come into the areas. Explain that this meant many missionaries did not have anyone visit them or have the freedom to leave for over a year and a half.



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

SAY “ During these difficult days, missionaries were still faithful to share the gospel with the people of Southeast Asia. We can also be faithful to share the gospel when we face hard times. God can use an illness or a tragedy to help others see the hope of the gospel. ”

Pray for missionaries around the world who are facing challenging times. Ask God to help them trust Him and hope in His promise to one day make all things new.

6 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

Before the session, write each word of the key passage on a sticky note. Then place the sticky notes around the room.

Show the key passage poster. Lead kids in reading aloud 2 Corinthians 7:10 together.

SAY “ Our key passage talks about salvation. From what does Jesus save us? [Allow kids to respond.] Jesus saves us from sin and death and gives us new life in Him. ”

Challenge kids to find all the sticky notes and work together to place them in order on a wall in front of the room as quickly as they can. Repeat as time allows and see if the group can beat their first time. If you have a large group, consider forming kids into smaller groups.

Lead kids to sing “Lead Us To Salvation (2 Corinthians 7:10).” You may also choose to sing a worship song of your choice.

7 PRAY (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before transitioning to Love.

SAY “ Thank You, God, for Your faithfulness toward us. Thank You that even while we were lost in sin, You sent Your Son, Jesus, to rescue us from sin and give us new life. Help us remain faithful to You, Lord. In Jesus’ name, amen. ”

Transition from **LEARN** to **LOVE**

