UPPER ELEM Flight Plan
November 15th

Lesson	**God's People Restored**
Bible Passage	Nehemiah 8-13
Story Point	God's people repented and promised to be faithful.
Key Passage	"The God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, establish, strengthen, and support you after you have suffered a little while." 1 Peter 5:10
Big Picture Q & A	**Who is in control of everything?** God is in control of everything in heaven and on earth.





Ezra was a priest in Babylon at the end of the exile. More than 50 years after the first group of exiles returned to Jerusalem and completed and dedicated the temple, Ezra led a second group back to Jerusalem.

Just as God had been with Nehemiah, He was with Ezra—granting him favor with the Persian king. The king gave Ezra permission to go to Jerusalem. He provided Ezra with a letter and access to resources to ensure safe travel. (See Ezra 7:11-26.)

Ezra traveled to Jerusalem with a purpose. God's people had spent 70 years in exile, and they needed to be reminded how to live. As a scribe, Ezra was an expert on the law of Moses, and he had "determined in his heart to study the law of the LORD, obey it, and teach its statutes and ordinances in Israel" (Ezra 7:10).

Under Nehemiah's leadership, the people had rebuilt Jerusalem's walls. They gathered together at the Water Gate to hear the law of Moses. Men, women, and children—anyone who could understand—came to listen to the reading of God's Word.

From early morning until midday, Ezra read from the book of the law of Moses. He stood on a high wooden platform where everyone could see and hear him. Ezra opened the book of the law, and everyone stood up. The Levites helped the listeners understand the words of the law. The people reacted strongly to hearing and understanding the law of Moses. Verse 9 says the people wept. The law revealed their sin, and they repented.

God's Word is powerful. The law reveals our sin and how short we fall of meeting God's standard. As you teach kids, help them recognize that we cannot meet God's requirements. We need a Savior. God sent Jesus to obey the law perfectly and die for our sins. We can trust in Him for salvation.

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Gospel—Centered Preparation:

The heart of preparation is rooted in your understanding of the gospel and your personal application of the story.

After your study ask yourself:

- How do the verse and Big Picture Question connect to this story?
- What am I excited to teach from this passage?
- The main point this week is: _____
- Where is the gospel in this story?

November Focus: God's People are Restored



NOV 1st: The Temple was Rebuilt *Ezra 4-6; Haggai*
Story point: God's people rebuilt the temple to glorify God.



NOV 8th: The Walls Rebuilt *Nehemiah 1-6*
Story Point: God used Nehemiah to rebuild Jerusalem's walls.



NOV 15th: God's People Restored *Nehemiah 8-13*
Story Point: God's people repented and Promised to be faithful.



NOV 22nd: Malachi the Prophet *Malachi*
Story Point: Malachi called God's people to repent to prepare for the Messiah.



Co-Pilot—Included Preparation:

On a Sunday morning, the Pilot is leading everyone in our ongoing journey to Jesus– that includes both flyers and Co-Pilots! The more consistency and continuity we have between Pilots, the better we can prepare our helpers to succeed and grow! With that consistency comes the mentorship aspect for our youth volunteers in particular, and utilizing our adult co-pilots as well: sharing activities, engaging them in the morning, and encouraging their involvement.

As you prepare for the lesson, ask yourself:

- **Does my planning allow for Co-Pilot participation throughout the morning?**
- **How did I prepare my Co-Pilot to help with classroom management?**
- **What specific activities will my Co-Pilot assist with today?**
- **In what ways can I encourage my Co-Pilot?**

Engagement

- Sit with child during the story
- Playing alongside flyers
- Reengage chatty/distracted kids
- Ask to volunteer an example during discussion
- Help play to Co-Pilot's strengths

Activities

- Attendance stickers
- Timeline
- Joining in the verse and BPQ&A
- Assigned to a specific flyer
- Helping find books in the Bible
- Leading crafts & songs

Encouragement

- Thank you for stepping in there!
- You did a great job with _____.
- You really helped me while I was _____.
- Thank you for being _____'s buddy today.
- Your help really made this morning go smoothly.
- _____ was the right thing to do. You handled it well!
- I'm so glad you are here today!

Sunday Morning Flight Plan



Take Off

- Open in Prayer
- Hook
- BPQ and A & Key Passage
- Timeline & Introduce Story

10 Min

Journey

- Attendance & Bible Sticker
- Bible Story
- God's Attributes

15 Min

Flight Lab

- Experience of the Bible Story (Make connections through an activity & motion)

15 Min

Pilot's Log

- Pray
- Calm activity during pick-up
- Give activity sheets to parents as they pick up students

5 Min

PICK UP:

First Service:
Around 9:45

Second Service:
Around 11:45

10 min Take Off

Celebrate being here! Introduce the morning.

Open in Prayer

Hook

Prompt kids to discuss what brings out different emotions in them. What makes them happy? What makes them sad? How do their faces and their actions show those emotions?

Big Picture Question

Do you remember the big picture question and answer from the last few weeks? Say it with me: ***Who is in control of everything? God is in control of everything in heaven and on earth.*** God knows when things will begin and when they will be finished. He cares about every part of our lives and works out all things for His glory and our good***.***

Key Passage

Show the key passage poster. Lead the boys and girls to read/sing **1 Peter 5:10** (with video/hand motions). Our key passage says that God will support us. Even when we make poor choices, God gives us the opportunity to repent and turn away from those wrong choices and turn toward Him.

Timeline/Introduce Bible Story:

Previously, we learned that the walls and gates around Jerusalem were destroyed. These walls were important because they kept God's people safe from their enemies. God's people often faced others who did not agree with them. Nehemiah was far away, still working for the king of Persia, but when he heard that God's people were in danger, he was sad. The king allowed Nehemiah to go back to Jerusalem. **God used Nehemiah to rebuild Jerusalem's walls.** In today's story, we will fast forward 52 days to the time when the walls and gates were finally repaired. The people of Jerusalem gathered together to listen to God's Word and to celebrate

Transition to Bible Story: (OPTIONAL) Show the Bible Story Video.

15 Min Journey

Where we travel into God's word

Bible Story

Open your Bible to Nehemiah 8-13 Read from the Bible or use the story example to help you tell the story.

Wrap up with the insights below.

Did you all notice how much respect the people showed for God's words? Men, women, and children came to hear Ezra read God's Word. What are some ways the people showed how much they loved God's words? (They stood for hours, listened carefully, lifted their hands, and bowed their faces to the ground.) The people did not even understand the words at first, but the people knew God's words were important. Some of the leaders explained God's words.

The words they heard were not all happy words. As the people heard the law, they realized that they had not followed God's rules; they had sinned. The people felt sad. Some of them even cried. They didn't make excuses for their sin or ignore God.

Ezra helped the people understand that God still loved them and that they could repent and follow God. So God's people repented and promised to be faithful.

When we repent, we turn away from sin and self, and we turn toward God and the things that honor Him.



God's Word is powerful. When Ezra read God's Word, the people changed their ways and loved God more. The Bible says that Jesus is "the Word." Jesus is God who came to live with people on earth. Jesus has the power to change our hearts. He has power over everything!

Age Appropriate Story

STORY POINT: GOD'S PEOPLE REPENTED AND PROMISED TO BE FAITHFUL.

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 the priest brought out the book of the law. 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. The people in the crowd worshiped God. Some of the leaders explained the law to the people The people began to cry. The people realized they had sinned.

Ezra, the Levites, and Nehemiah 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.

Ezra said to them, "Go home and prepare a feast! Eat rich food and drink sweet drinks. Share what you have." 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."

Nehemiah led God's people to repent and confess their sin. They agreed to worship only God and promised to obey Him.

Christ Connection: God's Word is powerful. When Ezra read God's Word, the people loved God more and changed their ways. The Bible says that Jesus is "the Word." Jesus is God who came to live with people on earth. Jesus has the power to change our hearts.

Discussion & Bible Skills

Distribute Bibles. Guide boys and girls to open their Bibles to Nehemiah 8. Explain that the Book of Nehemiah is part of the Bible's Old Testament History division, which tells the story of God's people. The events from this book took place about 400 years before Jesus was born. You may want to choose a volunteer to read aloud Nehemiah 8:2-3. • God's people gathered to hear Ezra read the law. When they heard God's words, they understood that they had turned away from God. They needed to repent and turn back to God. God's people repented and promised to be faithful. Lead the group to discuss:

1. **How did the Israelites' view of God's Word help them make the right choice?** *The Israelites trusted God's Word, stood when it was read, listened attentively, and praised God. They respected God's Word and trusted that it was true, even when it showed they needed to repent and make changes in their lives.* (Option: Choose a kid to read 2 Tim. 3:16-17.)
2. **How does God's Word change us today?** *Lead kids to recognize that the Bible is inspired by God and can be used to teach, rebuke, correct, and train people to follow God. The Bible is trustworthy and can speak to every area of our lives. We can respect, follow, and trust the Bible because it comes from God.* (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Neh. 8:5-6.)
3. **What are some ways people respond to God's Word today?** *Invite kids to discuss. Point out how people responded to God's Word in today's story. They responded physically by kneeling, but they also responded spiritually by repenting and turning away from bad choices and turning toward God.* (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Rom. 15:4.)



God's attributes- helping the children understand what God is like, shown to us in the Bible. In today's story we see that God is:

- **FATHER**

Travel Guide:

Use the travel guide for maps, charts, etc… as useful with helping the children learn and understand today's story.

15 min **Flight Lab**

Instill Wonder as you experience the Bible

CHOOSE ONE ACTIVITY

Party Time

Today's Bible story is about celebrating a special day. Help kids set the stage by decorating the classroom for a celebration. Decorations can be as elaborate or as simple as you want. You might have kids work together to make a *Celebration!* banner on a long piece of paper. Consider purchasing decorations from a party supply store, or provide materials for the kids to make decorations themselves.

• We got to learn about a time when God's people celebrated in a big way! The walls and gates around Jerusalem had just been finished. The people all gathered together and listened to Ezra, the priest, read God's words.

Expected Outcomes

Provide painting smocks to protect clothing. Set out jars of paint. Give each of the kids a large piece of paper and a paintbrush. Allow them to experiment mixing colors to make new colors.• Were you pretty confident that you knew which color you would get when you mixed yellow and blue together? Every time we mix those two colors, we get green. Depending on how much blue or yellow you use you might get a different shade, but it'll always be green. We can know some things for certain. We can also have confidence that God is going to keep His promises. He has promised to make a way out of sin for us, and He has done that through His Son, Jesus. We know that when we confess and repent of our sin He is faithful to forgive us.

Extreme Rock-paper-scissors

Prepare the playing area by arranging 10 to 12 hula hoops in a path on the floor. (Option: Use tape to mark 10 to 12 spots on the floor.)

Form two teams. Instruct teams to line up single file at opposite ends of the path. The first player in each line will hop on one foot along the path until the two players meet in the middle. The two kids will play rock-paper-scissors. The player who loses will hop off the path and return to the end of his line. At the same time, the next player from his team begins hopping forward along the path. The winning player continues hopping toward the opposing team.

Again, when players meet, the kids play rock-paper-scissors. A team wins a round by reaching the other team first. Then reset players and continue as time allows.

• When you lost rock-paper-scissors, you had to turn around and go back to your team. When we repent, we turn away from sin and self, and we turn toward God and living in a way that honors Him.

God's Word is powerful. When Ezra read God's Word, the people loved God more and changed their ways. **God's people repented and promised to be faithful.** The Bible says that Jesus is "the Word." Jesus is God who came to live with people on earth. Jesus has the power to change our hearts.

Celebration Mural

Hang a long piece of paper on a wall and invite kids to draw pictures of their 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) Invite volunteers to share their drawings with the class.

• 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!

5 min Pilot's log

Where we prepare to depart.

Pray:

If time, share prayer requests and allow kids to record in the **prayer journal section of their *Travel Guide***.

ALWAYS CLOSE THE MORNING WITH PRAYER.

This is how we model incorporating prayer into their lives.

Waiting for parents/Activity Page:

Tie back into the lesson, remind them of the Big Picture Question/verse, etc…

Be sure to **re-set expectations on what their choices are while waiting for mom and dad:**

- Activity page
- Key Passage Activity (See next page for list of options)
- Coloring page
- Gospel Kit Activities
- Anything quiet at the tables you are ok with *(origami, free draw on blank paper, hangman game at white board, putting Book of the Bible cards in order, etc….)*

Be sure that the Co-Pilots hand out the Activity sheet to each child or to parents so they can go home with families.

Key Passage Review Extra Ideas:

Invite kids to sit around tables. Give each kid a pencil. Show the key passage poster and lead them to read it aloud.

Give a piece of paper to one kid at each table. Instruct him to write down the first word of the key passage and pass the paper to the person on his right. That person will write down the second word, pass the paper to her right, and so on. Kids will pass the paper around the table, writing one vword at a time until they finish the key passage. When kids finish, invite groups one at time to say the key passage together.

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Display the key passage poster. Lead the kids to read it aloud. Then challenge them to read it in various ways: whispering, shouting, quickly, slowly, and so on.

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Form two groups of kids. Call on the first group to say the key passage together. Then call on the second group to say it.

Prompt the first group to say the passage a few phrases at a time, pausing for the second group to echo. When kids finish saying the key passage, lead the second group to begin and the first group to echo.

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Instruct kids to sit or stand in a circle. Choose one kid to begin by saying the first word of the key passage. Guide kids to say the key passage, one word at a time, moving around the circle.

Allow kids to look at the key passage poster if they need help remembering the words. Continue around the circle a few times. Consider shouting, "Switch!" and letting kids move to another place in the circle before playing again. *Or toss the ball to different kids rather than go in order.*

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Before the session, write out the key passage on a chalkboard or dry erase board in eight separate phrases. Display the phrases where kids can see them. Give each kid a marker and eight craft sticks. Instruct kids to copy from the board, writing each phrase on a separate stick. Then instruct kids to mix up their sticks and then quickly rearrange the phrases in the correct order. Kids may work individually or in pairs. Provide rubber bands for kids to bundle their sticks and keep them as a method of practicing the key passage during the week.

Prayer Extra Ideas:

Prayer Chain—In small groups, ask children/co-pilot to write prayer requests on a few paper strips. Connect paper strips into a chain and display our growing conversation to the Lord. Feel free to revisit older requests as well.

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Painted Rocks—Have each child choose a painted rock to write on. Write a word of encouragement, a word about Jesus, a name, etc. The goal is to take it with them and place it somewhere near their typical living space– a neighbor's house, a store, a playground, etc. Then pray over the place or the people who are there.

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Pointing to a Map—Choose one or two kiddos to spin/close their eyes/find a certain color (you can be creative and have fun) and point to a country on the map. Place a pin in the place(s) and pray over it as a group. Even if you don't know anything about the country, we can lift up the people, pray for Jesus' light to shine there, the Gospel to be active there, and churches to grow, etc.

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Looking out the Window—Grab a dry erase marker, have the kids gather at the windows, and look outside. Ask the children to look for 3 things they can see out of the window to pray over. Using the dry erase marker, write those things on the window (Pre-K & K may draw things) and then pray over those things. Feel free to leave them on the window, so whenever we look through, those things are brought to our mind to pray for again.

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Head Shoulders Knees and Toes—Pray through the song.

- Head (mind, imagination, thoughts, creativity)
- Shoulders (physical strength, things we might be dealing with)
- Knees (dancing, playing, jumping, etc.)
- Toes (walking and following after Jesus, standing strong in our faith)
- Eyes, ears, mouth & nose (seeing goodness, listening to Him, speaking truthful words, our senses, etc.)

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Preschool Carpet Bag Prayers— Choose an item(s) out of the carpet bag. Discuss the item and different people/things the item could represent (car—driving safely, mechanics, trips, first responders, etc) Encourage kids to "think outside the bag" and help them make connections. Pray over the people, places, and things that were discussed.

You're ready for Sunday!

