

## WEEK 4

### HACKS FOR PRETEENS

ANIMATED

#### **REVISE**

To make this series more accessible for preteens, here's what to adjust . . .

##### **POLL | Kudos!**

Label each corner of the room one, two, three, and four. Direct preteens to move to the corner of the room that reflects their answer. Have kids work together to come up with why they picked this number over the others and have them present it to the rest of the group.

#### **REPLACE**

And here are the Building Blocks you may want to swap for something else . . .

##### **ACTIVITY | Comic Relief**

Have preteens try their hand at drawing Manga. Watch [this](#) video together as a reference and keep it playing as kids work. Give everyone sketch paper and pencils as they draw themselves as a Manga character with a cool name. You may want to pull up images of other Manga or anime characters to show them, and even [Manga Bible books](#).

##### **ACTIVITY | These Walls Won't Fall**

Provide preteens with a variety of building materials, such as LEGOs, cardboard boxes, cups, and permanent markers. Guide them to write a word from the Big Idea on each building block. For larger groups, form teams and give each group five minutes to build a creative tower that spells out the Big Idea.

#### **REMEMBER**

Preteens are moving up to, or are already in, middle school where they are forming their identity. Focus this week on affirming and valuing who the preteen is, not what the preteen does. Especially as they are in the stage in their lives when they're trying to find their place among their peers, they need to be reminded of their infinite value in the eyes of God!

# WEEK 4

## HACKS FOR KIDS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

ANIMATED

### REVISE

To make this series more accessible for kids with special needs, here's what to adjust . . .

#### **REFLECTION | In Your Eyes**

To ensure the conversation is flowing and it's reciprocated, providing options within the conversation or rephrasing the conversation may be helpful, like, "Do you value your toys or your books?" or "What is it that gives [insert item name] so much value to you?"

### REPLACE

And here are the Building Blocks you may want to swap for something else . . .

#### **ACTIVITY | Comic Relief**

Provide [anime-themed stickers](#) and have kids place them in a comic book template (like [this one](#)). Invite them to invent what kind of story is happening in each frame. (Sort through the stickers before passing them out because some assorted sets include stickers that may be inappropriate.)

### REMEMBER

There are several activities this week that require up-front or all-group involvement that some friends might feel hesitant to participate in. Create a quiet or calming space with different sensory bins for those kids who might feel overstimulated with the large group activities.

## WEEK 4 LESSON GUIDE

## ANIMATED

### BIG IDEA

Because of God,  
I can feel valued.

### BIBLE

**Nehemiah Rebuilds Jerusalem's Walls:**  
Nehemiah 2:1-6; 11-18; I Timothy 6:6-19

### LARGE GROUP TIME

Welcome to our final week of *Animated!* We've laughed, we've cried, and all along, we've seen that we can be truly animated by God — the God of all of our biggest feelings.

It's only fitting we end our series today by feeling the biggest feeling God gives to us — eternal value. Every single day, we should take time to remember we are priceless to God.

#### WHAT? What are we talking about today?

#### MUSIC | Worship

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** You can lead kids in worship with any songs of your choice, but here are some suggestions that go along with this month's theme. Make sure you have purchased any licenses required to play or perform these songs. For more information, [read this!](#)
  - "Leaning on the Everlasting Arms" (Lifetree Kids)
  - "Falling Into You" (Hillsong Young & Free)
  - "Trading My Sorrows" (Capitol Kids!)
  - "Anchored to You" (Elevation Youth)

#### ACTIVITY | Unlikely Heroes

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** In this activity, invite kids to consider that sometimes, heroes can be found in unlikely places. You'll need a dry erase board and dry erase marker (or poster board) to list the values and characteristics of heroes the kids describe, and some images of animated, unlikely heroes. For more information on how to legally use copyrighted material for educational purposes, [read this!](#)
  - Possible images to include:
    - [WALL-E](#) (WALL-E)
    - [Carl](#) (Up)
    - [Stitch](#) (Lilo and Stitch)

- [Flynn Rider](#) (*Tangled*)
- [Dory](#) (*Finding Nemo*)
- [Gru](#) (*Despicable Me*)
- [Mirabel](#) (*Encanto*)

- Today, we'll be talking about a hero found in the Bible. To get us thinking, I want to ask, **what do you think makes a hero?** [Write the kids' answers in a list on the dry erase board or poster board.]
- Let me introduce you to some of what I'd call unlikely heroes. [Show kids character images as you talk about each one.]
  - Wall-E was just a working robot that ended up saving an entire ship of humans.
  - Carl was an old, grumpy man who ended up mentoring Russ and changed both of their lives.
  - Stitch started out self-centered but ended up giving Lilo and her sister a family.
  - Flynn Rider was a big-time thief whose dream was to be on an island surrounded by piles of money but ended up helping reunite Rapunzel with her family.
  - Dory suffered from a big memory issue but ended up helping Marlin and Nemo find each other.
  - Gru wanted to rule the world but ended up adopting three kids.
  - Mirabel didn't get a power like everyone else in her family, but ended up using her special gift of love to protect her home and her family.
- These heroes show us that sometimes, true value can be found in unexpected places. The world tends to try and teach us that value can only be found in certain people for certain reasons, but God sees it differently.

## ACTIVITY | Comic Relief

- **Can you think of an unlikely hero you've heard of, either from a movie or in your real life?** Today, you'll have a chance to animate their story in a comic book. You can draw a story you've heard before or make one up!
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Invite kids to create a comic book scene of their own unlikely hero. Provide each kid with the comic book printable and some drawing utensils.

✖ **PRETEEN HACK:** Have preteens try their hand at drawing Manga. Watch [this](#) video together as a reference and keep it playing as kids work. Give everyone sketch paper and pencils as they draw themselves as a Manga character with a cool name. You may want to pull up images of other Manga or anime characters to show them, and even [Manga Bible books](#).

✖ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** Provide [anime-themed stickers](#) and have kids place them in a comic book template (like [this one](#)). Invite them to invent what kind of story is happening in each frame. (Sort through the stickers before passing them out because some assorted sets include stickers that may be inappropriate.)

## POLL | Kudos!

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Invite kids to respond to the following options by putting one, two, three, or four fingers in the air. If you want to get them moving, have kids move to the four corners of the room based on their answers.
 

✖ **PRETEEN HACK:** Label each corner of the room one, two, three, and four. Direct preteens to move to the corner of the room that reflects their answer. Have kids work together to come up with why they picked this number over the others and have them present it to the rest of the group.
- Would you rather . . .
  - 1. Get invited somewhere by a friend.
  - 2. Get an award, certificate, trophy, or medal from a teacher or coach.
  - 3. Have someone listen to the things you have to say.
  - 4. Have someone remember and celebrate a special occasion like your birthday.

- The truth is, we probably would like all of these things because stuff like this makes us feel cared about and valued.
- And that's exactly what we're going to be hearing about today!

## **SO WHAT? Why does it matter to God and to us?**

### **SCRIPTURE | Nehemiah 2:1–6, 11–18 (Nehemiah Rebuilds Jerusalem's Walls)**

- Has anyone ever seen one of the animated movies of Toy Story? There are four parts to Toy Story and today, we're going to look at one clip that shows a big, animated emotion. See if you can guess what it is.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Show [this](#) clip from "Toy Story 4" before telling today's Bible story. For more information on how to legally use copyrighted material for educational purposes, [read this!](#)
- **Can anyone guess our big, animated emotion today?** It's feeling valued!
- Bonnie probably felt like nobody at her new school valued her friendship or even knew she was there! She didn't know what to do and probably felt like she had nothing to contribute to the class.
- But when Woody secretly got her all those art supplies, she realized she could find value in herself, even if no one else recognized it.
- On top of all that, Bonnie built a spectacular new pal, Forky, and valued him as a special toy even though he was mostly made out of trash.
- So, how does this all tie together with our Bible story? Well, the leader we're talking about today, named Nehemiah, had a similar problem. Nehemiah was probably really lonely – and he might've even felt helpless to do anything about it. Let's take a look at his story.
- Nehemiah lived far away from his hometown of Jerusalem. He had a very important job working for the King of Persia. One day, Nehemiah found out the walls around Jerusalem had been destroyed. His hometown was in trouble and no one was doing anything about it!
- Hearing this caused Nehemiah to be incredibly sad. He prayed to God and asked for help. God valued Nehemiah so much and helped him in some big ways!
- [Read Nehemiah 2:1–6.]
  - God gave Nehemiah the words and confidence to talk to the king, who was his boss, and not only get permission to go to Jerusalem, but the king helped make the trip as easy as possible, including paying for most of what he needed!
- [Read Nehemiah 2:11–16.]
  - When Nehemiah arrived in Jerusalem and saw with his own eyes the destruction, it was so much worse than he thought. And no one, not one single person, was doing anything about it. But God gave Nehemiah a plan.
- [Read Nehemiah 2:17–18.]
  - Rebuilding the wall wasn't Nehemiah's responsibility at all. But Nehemiah loved Jerusalem, and he saw value in his hometown. So, Nehemiah prayed to God for help and direction, and God once again helped Nehemiah.
- Nehemiah was filled with confidence to lead the people of Jerusalem to take on the ginormous task of rebuilding. He was able to do this because he knew God was with him. And because of this, Nehemiah felt valued by God.

## BIG IDEA | Because of God, I can feel valued.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Go to [app.animaker.com](http://app.animaker.com) and create another short and easy animation to reveal this week's Big Idea. Alternatively, you can create two speech balloons with poster board and write "Because of God," on one and "I can feel valued" on the other. Invite two volunteers to hold up a speech balloon and freeze in a funny, cartoon pose. Have the volunteers unfreeze and say what's in their respective balloons when the kids yell, "Animate!"
- Let's all say the Big Idea together: **Because of God, I can feel valued.**

## VIDEO | Animated, Episode 4

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Play this week's episode of [Grow TV](#).

## ACTIVITY | Trash or Treasure

- Think about trash. **Why do we throw things away?** It's usually because we no longer have a use for them or because they're damaged.
- But sometimes, some of the things we throw away can be recycled and reused for new things.
  - There's a saying that goes, "One person's trash is another person's treasure." That means what might seem useless to somebody could end up being highly useful to someone else.
  - I mean, look at all these cool things you could make out of used water bottles! [Show [this](#) image or something like it.]
  - That's what happened to Forky in the clip we saw before our Bible story. And the same thing with Nehemiah, who might have been a servant in the king's palace, but was used by God to lead the charge to rebuild his beloved hometown.
- Let's make some trash creations, kind of like Forky!
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Give each kid the supplies necessary to make their own trash creation — disposable silverware and plates, pipe cleaners, scraps of paper, googly eyes, and glue are a great place to start. Begin with the supplies in a pile on the table. For dramatic effect, maybe even dump them onto the table out of a clean trash can. As kids work on their pieces, ask the following questions:
  - **How does creating something make it more valuable to you?**
  - God made you and everyone else and that's why we are a priceless treasure to God. That's why, **because of God, I can feel valued.** And we feel valued because we are valued!

## ACTIVITY | VIP

- Some animated movies have special screenings before they're released where only VIPs are invited.
- **Do you know what VIP stands for?** That's right! A VIP is a very important person. Let's say you have a VIP pass to somewhere really fun and you can only bring the very important people in your life with you. **Who are they?**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Pass out a VIP pass to each kid along with drawing utensils. Draw your family as stick figures on a piece of paper and then ask the kids to draw the important people in their lives on their paper. Once the kids are finished, either laminate their pictures, punch a hole at the top, or put it on a lanyard to make it look like a VIP pass.
- **Who did you draw? What makes them important to you?**
- Just like there are people in our lives we value, **because of God, I can feel valued**, too. You are a VIP in God's eyes!

## SCRIPTURE | 1 Timothy 6:6–19

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read 1 Timothy 6:6–19 together. For younger kids, choose a few verses you want to emphasize. For older kids, have them use their Bibles or consider providing them with a printout of the verses and a pencil or pen they can use to circle words that pop out to them as you read.

- The world places value on things we don't need to bother with. The writer of this letter, Paul, explains to Timothy that God wants us to see some things as extremely valuable.
- Just imagine finding a \$100 bill laying on the ground. **What would you think?** I'd think, "Wow! That's worth a lot. That's something worth keeping!"
- But you know what has infinitely more value? The things of the heart — things like making wise choices, following the example of Jesus, having faith, loving others, being patient, and being kind.
- One time, Jesus went up on a hill and began telling people basically everything they — and we — need to know.
- Right as Jesus was talking, Jesus started discussing treasure. Now, Jesus wasn't talking about the stuff on pirate ships — Jesus was talking about what we value, like in the scripture we just read.
- [Read Matthew 6:21.]
- Jesus told the people instead of placing value on material things, they should value things related to God.
- Jesus said we have to choose between treasure here and now or treasure in heaven. And Paul, in this letter, is saying the same thing to Timothy.
- Your value doesn't come from what you have, what you can do, who your family is, or where you go to school. Your value comes from the fact that God loves you.
- And since our value doesn't come from things on Earth, we shouldn't be so fixated on those things. We can choose treasure in heaven and grow in our relationship with God because, in the end, that's what really matters.

## NOW WHAT? What does God want us to do about it?

### REFLECTION | In Your Eyes

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Invite kids to reflect on today's Big Idea.
  - ✖ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** To ensure the conversation is flowing and it's reciprocated, providing options within the conversation or rephrasing the conversation may be helpful, like, "Do you value your toys or your books?" or "What is it that gives [insert item name] so much value to you?"
- **Can you think of something (not a person) you value?**
- **What makes it so valuable to you?**
- Often, what we value isn't about how expensive it was or how much others might want it. That might be some of it, but maybe that thing reminds you of something or someone. Or you worked really hard to earn it. Maybe you had a hand in making it and that makes you feel proud!
- When we think about this, we begin to scratch the surface of why we are so valuable to God. God made us. We are God's masterpieces.
- Think about the thing you value most. In your eyes, it's priceless. Multiply that feeling times infinity and you still wouldn't fully know the value you have in God's eyes.
- **Because of God, I can feel valued.**

### ACTIVITY | These Walls Won't Fall

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** In this activity, kids will build a wall with wallpaper bricks. You can either pin or tape these to a wall, prepare a wall with butcher paper and stick the bricks to the butcher paper, or have large cardboard boxes they can stick the bricks to. Purchase something like [this](#). Cut the paper into single bricks. Pass out one "brick" to each kid. For older kids, pass out permanent markers. For younger kids, have the leaders do the writing. If you have more than one service, keep the bricks up and have the next service add to the wall.
  - ✖ **PRETEEN HACK:** Provide preteens with a variety of building materials, such as LEGOs, cardboard boxes, cups, and permanent markers. Guide them to write a word from the Big Idea

on each building block. For larger groups, form teams and give each group five minutes to build a creative tower that spells out the Big Idea.

- **What's one thing that makes you invaluable to God?** Write that on your brick, which might include things like . . .
  - I'm a child of God.
  - God loves me.
  - I'm God's creation.
  - I make God smile.
- Just by the fact that you exist, you are extremely valued by God! Knowing this should help you build your confidence and self-love and also your trust in God . . . because God is still working and building you up for great things!

### **MEMORY VERSE | Romans 15:13a (NIV)**

- **"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him."**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Have the kids sing Romans 15:13a to the tune of a famous animated movie song. To get things started, we recommend "We Don't Talk About Bruno" from the movie, "Encanto." Feel free to pick a few songs if there are more recent and fun options your kids would know. (**Don't forget to also check out the memory verse signs – a combination of SEE and ASL – available in your Programming folder or at growcurriculum.org/Romans15-13a.)**

### **PRAYER**

- God, thank you for giving me infinite value. Help me to believe in my own value and live it out every day. Help me to see those around me as you see them. Show me what I, like Nehemiah, can rebuild in this broken world because of the confidence you give me. Amen.

## **SMALL GROUP TIME**

### **DISCUSSION**

- **What happened to Nehemiah's hometown?**
- **What did God tell Nehemiah to do?**
- **What are some things Nehemiah would have to do to follow through with God's instructions?**
- **Read 1 Timothy 6:17. According to the writer of this letter, where should we, as children of God, find value?**
- **How do you treat things (or people) you value differently from things you don't value?**
- **What would be one way of treating others the way God values them?**
- **What's one thing you can do to treat yourself like you have infinite value?**

### **ACTIVITY | Stop Motion Series**

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Ahead of time, download the app, [Stop Motion Studio](#). Divide kids into groups of four or five and provide letter cutouts (or have kids make their own). Encourage the groups to work together to make a creative display of the Big Idea. Check out a video like [this](#) for inspiration. Alternatively, divide the kids into groups and have them create their own actions to the Big Idea. Remind them to make the motions big and fast. You can film them in slow-mo with your phone and show it back to them.
- I hope making these Big Idea movies has been a valuable experience for you! And speaking of things with value, hang on to today's Big Idea: **Because of God, I can feel valued.**

# WEEK 4

## SMALL GROUP GUIDE

ANIMATED

### BIG IDEA

Because of God,  
I can feel valued.

### BIBLE

Nehemiah Rebuilds Jerusalem's Walls:  
Nehemiah 2:1-6; 11-18; I Timothy 6:6-19

### QUESTIONS

- What happened to Nehemiah's hometown?
- What did God tell Nehemiah to do?
- What are some things Nehemiah would have to do to follow through with God's instructions?
- Read 1 Timothy 6:17. According to the writer of this letter, where should we, as children of God, find value?
- How do you treat things (or people) you value differently from things you don't value?
- What would be one way of treating others the way God values them?
- What's one thing you can do to treat yourself like you have infinite value?

### ACTIVITY

Using the Stop Motion Studio app, have kids work together to create their own short stop motion video. Provide letter cutouts (or have kids make their own), and encourage them to work together to make a creative display of the Big Idea. Scan the QR code for an example. Alternatively, have kids create their own actions to the Big Idea. Remind them to make the motions big and fast. You can film them in slow-mo with your phone and show it back to them.



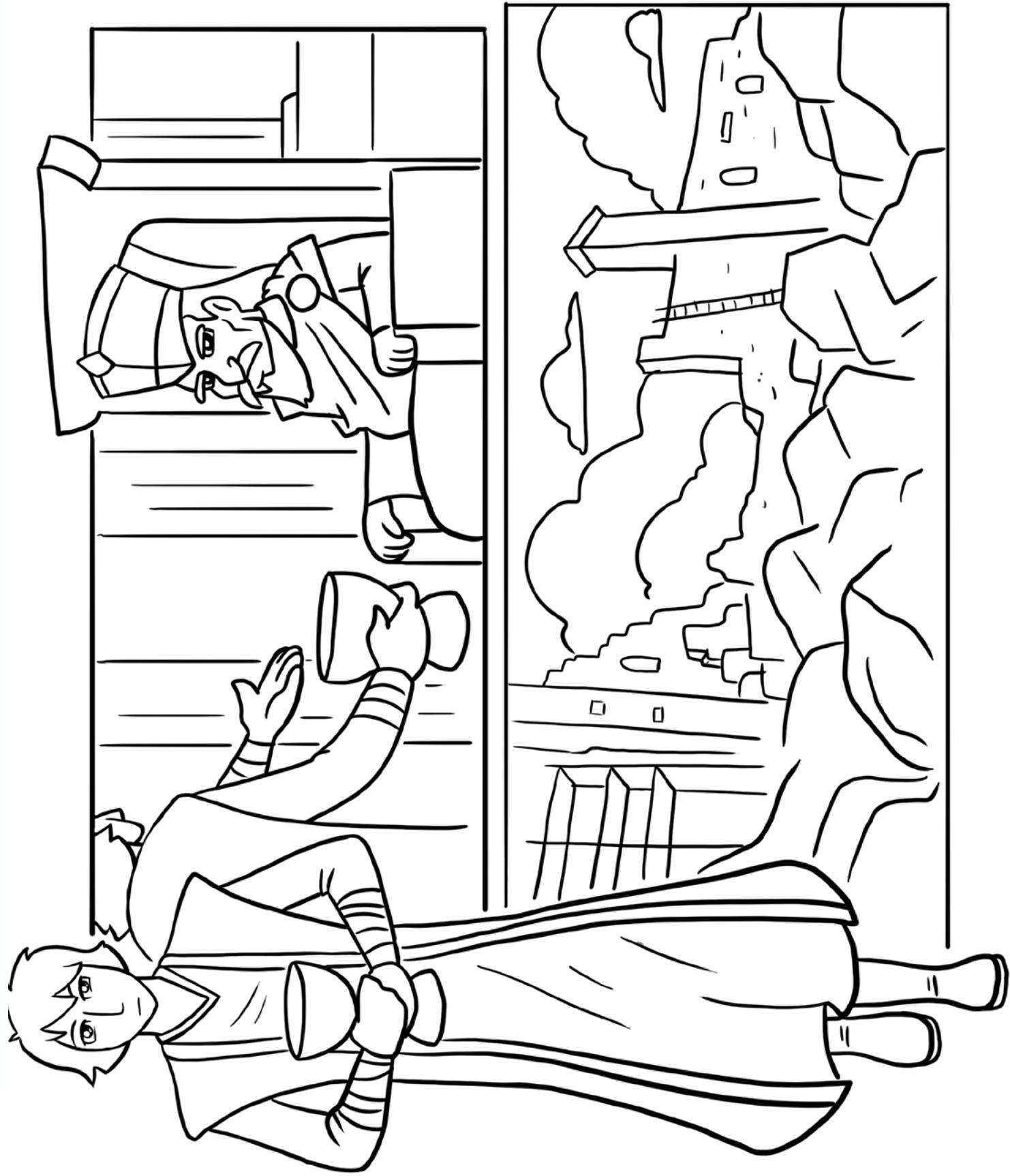
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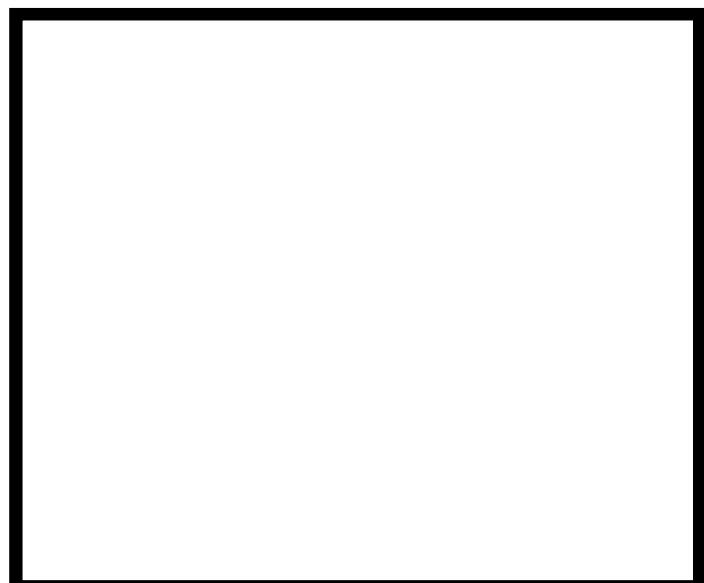
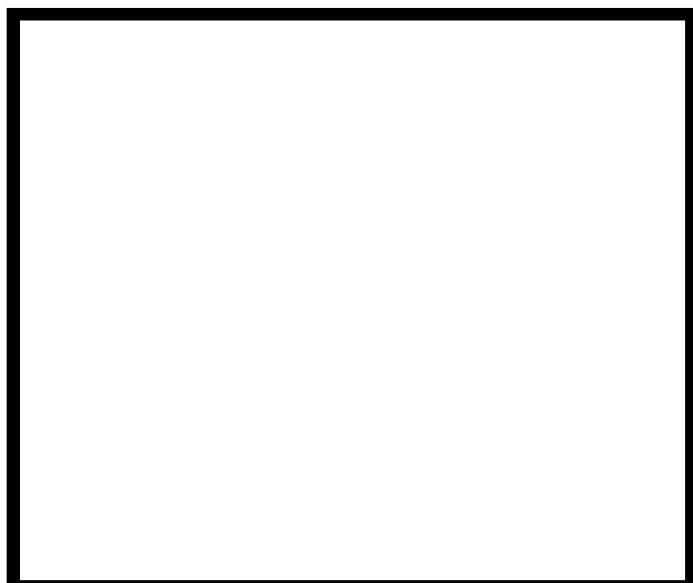
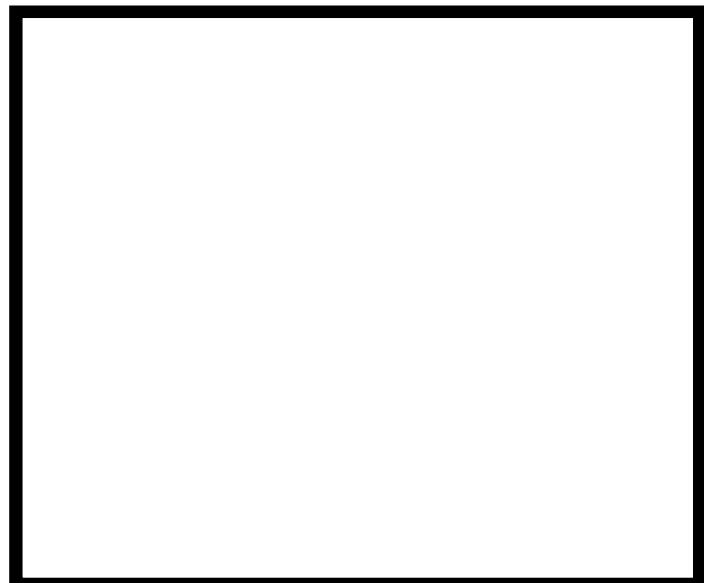
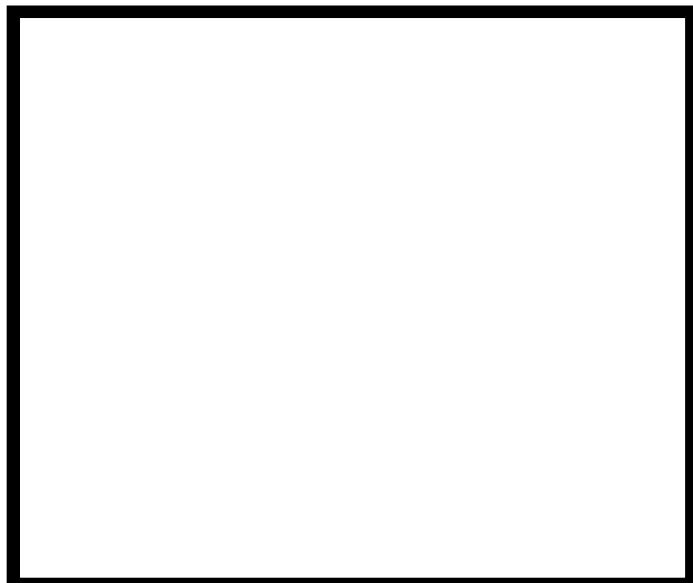
**MEMORY VERSE:** "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him."  
— Romans 15:13a (NIV)

[Click here](#) for a memory verse sign language tutorial video you can share with your families and volunteers!

**BIG IDEA:** Because of God, I can feel valued.

**BIBLE:** Nehemiah rebuilds Jerusalem's Walls: Nehemiah 2:1–6, 11–18; 1 Timothy 6:6–19





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