

# Serving Together

## Build Up One Another

Duplicate the following skit and present it as readers theatre (reading the parts with expression, but not necessarily with actions). You might also consider creating puppets (based on the K.I.D.S. mascot characters) and using them to present the story. You will need a stack of at least six shoeboxes for props.

**Richie:** *(As he stacks up a pile of shoeboxes)*

Well, today's the big day for putting together our project for people at the homeless shelter. I wonder why I always get the job of organizing things?

**Billy:** *(Rings the doorbell)* Hi, Richie. Like, wow! What's going on here?

**Richie:** I'm glad to see you, Billy, but I hope you brought something with you.

**Billy:** Zoinks! I just brought my dog, Bucky. Will that do?

**Richie:** Uh-oh! I don't think so. Today is the day we put together hygiene kits for people in need. I don't think Bucky is what they need.

**Billy:** Never fear—I'm just kidding. I have a whole shoebox full of toothpaste to give away.

**Richie:** Hey! I'd better send a text message to the rest of the K.I.D.S. Count gang. We're going to need reinforcements to get this job done. *(Takes out cell phone and inputs message.)* "ned hlp asap cmb" *(Need help as soon as possible. Call me back.)*

**Millicent:** *(Opens her cell phone to read the message, responds)* Count on me! Be right there. "bfn" *(Bye for now.)*

**Richie:** *(Phone rings again, and he reads the messages)* Penny says "cys" *(see you soon)*, and Goldie says "cu" *(see you)*. It looks like we're ready to roll.

**Millicent:** *(Arriving with the other girls, all carrying bags of supplies)* Hi, guys. I brought thirty-two bottles of liquid handsoap. There was a big sale, and my mom overdid it. She told Dad she was saving money, but he said we were wasting cupboard space. He said what we need is to save space—for food!

**Goldie:** I cleaned off some of our cupboard shelves. We have much more shampoo than we need, especially since my dad is bald!

**Penny:** We didn't have any extras at home, but Mom had a plan. She and I used two shopping carts at the store. Her cart was filled with things for our family, and my cart was filled with things to purchase for a homeless family.

**Richie:** We've got a great project—a great stewardship project—on our hands.

**Bucky:** Woof! What?

**Richie:** Stewardship is using the things God gives us wisely and well. That means we don't waste or misuse His blessings selfishly. That means we gratefully share what we have with others who have less than we do.

**Billy:** Well, I'm sharing toothpaste!

**Richie:** Good stewardship also means giving our time and our talents for God and for others.

**Millicent:** I'm giving soap, but I'm also giving some of my time. Instead of taking time to play soccer today, I'm "spending time" here, working with you guys to help some other guys.

**Penny:** Speaking of work, let's get busy. What should we do?

**Richie:** Well, I've got a plan. No one wants a whole bag of shampoo. So we need to divide our collections. Let's distribute each of the products, one per shoebox.

**Goldie:** I can see why Richie is in charge. He has a real talent for planning and organizing. He knows how to manage a project smoothly.

**Penny:** That's good stewardship too. Richie is using the abilities God gave him to help others.

**Millicent:** Richie reminds me of a Bible story about a good manager named Nehemiah. He got people together to work on a really big project. And he always gave credit to God for their success.

**Goldie:** Jeepers! This stack of boxes reminds me of Nehemiah's project. We've built a wall of shoeboxes; Nehemiah built a wall of stones.

**Penny:** This Nehemiah guy needs further investigation. I'm going to get my Bible.

**Richie:** Good idea, Penny, but first let's finish the project we started.

**Billy:** Shoeboxes, shampoo, toothpaste, and soap . . . wait a minute! We're missing something else that people need. Where does Jesus fit into this project?

**Bucky:** Woof! Right!

**Richie:** You are so right! Nehemiah always directed the people to God's love and God's will. We can do the same.

**Goldie:** Groovy! Let's put a message about Jesus in each box.

**Penny:** That rocks! Let's care and share God's gifts for the body and for the soul!

**Bucky:** Woof, woof, woof-ray!

**Richie:** Great! Let's get busy then. And remember, to quote that famous guy Nehemiah, "The joy of the LORD is your strength."

**Billy:** *(Whispering)* Psst! If he's so famous, why haven't I heard of him?

**Penny:** *(Whispering)* Stay tuned!

## Service Project

*As a class or school, organize a collection of hygiene kits. Designate different tasks to several committees. You will need packaging (shoeboxes or plastic bags). You will need to set dates and send out publicity. What other hygiene products could you gather other than those mentioned in the story? Do you want to designate that only unbreakable products be gathered? Determine where the kits will be sent (homeless shelter, church pantry, mission package). Include a Gospel message in each kit, such as Reproducible 2. (To add color to the message, color each box with a highlighter pen or a light pastel crayon.)*



**Here's our gift to you.**

**But don't thank us.**

**Thank Jesus!**

**Thank Jesus for His greatest gift.**

**He washes away our sins.**

**He cleans our hearts and gives us hope.**

**He gives us a new start and a new life.**

**By God's grace through faith, we are His people.**

# Working Together

## Bible Application Activities

### Yes, You Can!

You might say, “Nehemiah was a great guy, but what does that have to do with me? I can’t do great things; I’m not important.”

- Remember—Nehemiah was just a cupbearer! His strength came from trusting in God. Don’t forget that God is also with you.
- Remember—Nehemiah was working with a half-empty, broken-down city; there was nothing mighty or glamorous there. Use whatever circumstances God has given you to the best of your ability, in service to others, and for God’s glory.
- Remember—Nehemiah did not do great things by himself; he and the people worked together, enabled by God’s grace and blessing.

The LCEF K.I.D.S. Stamp Program is a way you can work together with other people to build the walls (and ceiling and floors) of a church! Learn more about how the money you invest can be used as a loan to help churches spread the Gospel. So never say, “I can’t.” Together with other people, empowered by God’s grace, we can! As Philippians 4:13 says, “I can do all things through Him who strengthens me,” remembering that “the joy of the LORD is your strength” (Nehemiah 8:10). And “Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might” (Ephesians 6:10). Sing together the theme song, “My God Is So Great” (Reproducible 1).

Explore the LCEF (Lutheran Church Extension Fund) Web site to learn more about the K.I.D.S. Stamp Program and how your money can work to help God’s mission and ministry, spreading the news of salvation through Jesus and sharing His

love with others. Remind students: **The K.I.D.S. stamps you purchase are a guarantee of your loan. You are not giving money away—you are investing it. It will be returned to you someday and with interest! What a good way to manage your money wisely and well!**

### Time, Talents, Treasures

Display Poster 5. (The poster accompanies the Coordinator’s Guide and must be separated from Poster 6.) Point out that stewardship involves how we use our Time, Talents, and Treasures (TTT). Explain that these words refer to the things you have—the time you have, the abilities and talents you have, and the things you have that you value (treasures, such as money). Because we are sinful, selfish people, we often think the things we have belong to us and that we can do whatever we want with them. The truth is that these things are blessings from God. He entrusts them to us to use wisely and well! How can you determine if you are using something wisely and well? Analyze the matter—are you using it in ways that serve others and that give glory to God? Evaluate whether you are using your TTT for what you want or according to God’s will?

*Time.* Nehemiah gave up twelve years to serve God’s people (5:14). In what ways can you give up some of your time for others and for the Lord? (For example, you want to use your time to play video games, but your dad needs help with yard work.)

*Talents.* Nehemiah had talents for planning and managing a project. What are your talents? Look wider than your ability to play baseball or play the piano. Those do require abilities, but cheerfulness

and kindness are also special abilities you can use to help others and to glorify God. “Now there are varieties of gifts . . . service . . . activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone” (1 Corinthians 12:4–6).

*Treasures.* Nehemiah fed 150 people a day. That took a lot of money. Compare this to the cost of feeding a family of three (food for one day times 50) or a family of five (food for one day times 30). But treasure doesn’t have to mean a lot of money; treasure is whatever you value, even if it is just two dollars in change from a piggy bank. This isn’t a matter of giving it all away—this is a matter of managing your money, using it well and wisely. Point out that the LCEF K.I.D.S. Stamp Program is an opportunity to use money wisely: (1) you are investing for future needs; (2) in the meantime, Lutheran churches and schools can use the money for their building programs; and (3) when you get your money back, you get the extra value of interest earned.

## The Keystone

Return to Reproducible 3 in order to complete it. Look at the stone at the top of the archway. That stone is called a keystone. It is the most important stone, holding all the other stones in place. What would happen if that stone crumbled or was removed? (The whole archway and even the wall would begin to collapse.) A keystone is like a cornerstone of a building. Read Acts 4:11–12. What is the cornerstone of our faith? Write that name on the keystone on your sheet. If Jesus is our cornerstone, what does that make us? Read about it in 1 Peter 2:5. (We are like living stones.) Okay, what does that mean? Read verse 9 of that same chapter to discover what that means for our lives. (We are living stones; Jesus is our cornerstone. We are to live for Him, as His disciples.) So as living stones, what are we supposed to build? We are supposed to build up other people! Scripture says in 1 Thessalonians 5:11, “Encourage one another and build one another up.” Write these words in the open archway, and talk about ways that you can build up other people. (For example, helping them learn a new skill, encouraging them

when they have problems, being a friend, showing kindness) This is not easy to do, especially when our natural inclination is to be self-centered. Read Philippians 2:4–5 to discover that we can do this, but only through Christ Jesus, who has saved us for new life as His disciples and for eternal life in heaven.

## Praise God!

We praise God for His blessings to us when we use them well and wisely. We can also praise God with our songs and our words. Scan Nehemiah 9, looking for words of praise. Write those words on Reproducible 4 to build a psalm of praise and thanks to God. Read this together as part of a closing devotion. This new psalm will read as follows:

Stand up and bless the LORD your God from everlasting to everlasting. Blessed be Your glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise.

You are the LORD.

You have kept Your promise, for You are righteous.

You made a name for Yourself, as it is to this day.

You are a God ready to forgive, gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

You have blessed Your people.

You gave Your good Spirit to instruct them.

Many times You delivered them according to Your mercies.

You are a gracious and merciful God.

God, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who keeps covenant and steadfast love,

You have been righteous in all that has come upon us.

# A New Psalm

(Extracted from Nehemiah 9)

V. 5 Stand up \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

V. 7 You are \_\_\_\_\_

V. 8 You have \_\_\_\_\_

V. 10 You made \_\_\_\_\_

V. 17 You are a God \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

You have blessed Your people.

V. 20 You gave \_\_\_\_\_

V. 28 Many times \_\_\_\_\_

V. 31 You are \_\_\_\_\_

V. 32 God, the great \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

V. 33 You \_\_\_\_\_