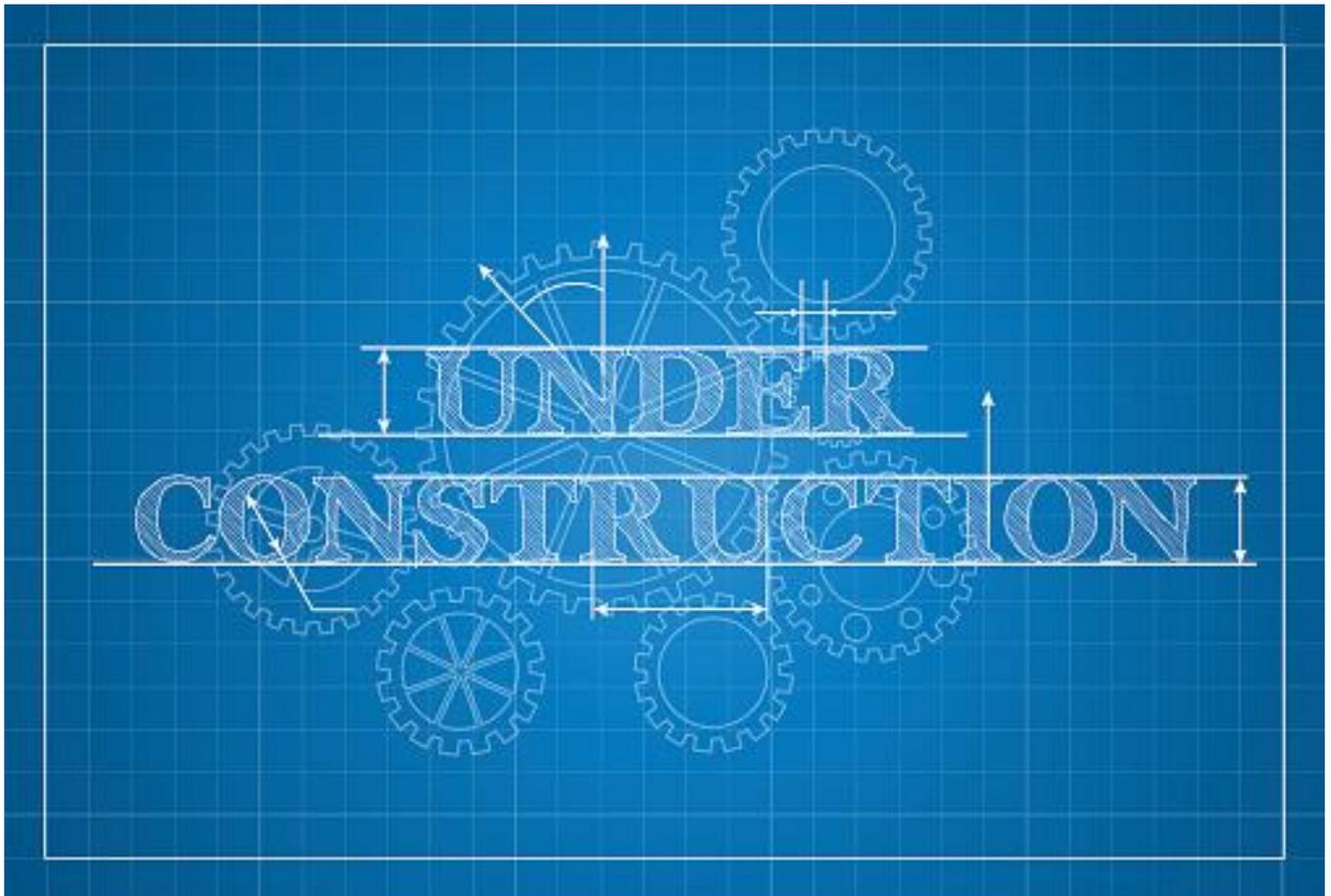


FOLLOWING NEW BLUEPRINTS
DEVOTIONAL
FOR RFK CAMP VOLUNTEERS



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Following New Blueprints Devotional – Written and compiled by Linda Chenot, RFK Director Liaison - May 2018

Dear RFK Volunteer,

We are thrilled that you have taken this step of faith to serve God and His KIDS this summer at a Royal Family KIDS Camp. It is important that you spend time with God in His word to prepare for this life changing week. The following devotions are based on the Bible passages used in the Following New Blueprints Curriculum. Ask God to prepare your heart for the week of camp as you read and journal using the questions. Your RFK Camp Director may ask you to discuss or share your thoughts during the staff meetings in a small group format or collectively if you feel comfortable doing so.

The story of Nehemiah is a powerful example of God's faithfulness to His people during times of severe stress and turmoil. Our week at camp parallels the story in many ways. Upon hearing his beloved city had no protection Nehemiah wept, prayed and took action. When you heard of how foster children are exposed to danger without the natural protection of a loving family to surround them, your heart was broken and God has led you to find a way to help them.

Nehemiah prayed, planned and prepared for the opportunity to do something. Like him, you have spent time in prayer. Nehemiah had to bring materials with him for the task of rebuilding the gates. God provided everything he needed for the task. You have prepared through many hours of training. You have planned for your role by gathering supplies, cabin décor, memorizing lines, rehearsals, learning hand motions, studying and training and raising finances. Like Nehemiah, you are taking time from regular work and life to rebuild and restore broken hearts. You are leaving the comfort and routine of home to sleep on a rubber mattress in a cabin with people you don't know well and eat camp food for a week. It doesn't get much better than this!

Under Nehemiah's leadership Israel's workers completed the entire project in 52 days! Despite the opposition and threat of attack God gave Nehemiah and Israel great success. In RFK we never underestimate what God can do in a short period of time! We call it the week that lasts a lifetime. In five days God does groundbreaking transformational work in the heart. You may not see the results on Friday, but you can be confident He will continue working to help them to follow His word.

To Camp Directors/Devotional Leaders: Staff meetings are short and time does not allow for complete review of the extensive passages being covered each day in the Bible Lesson. As you or one of your staff lead the devotional thoughts each day – look for ways to direct them to God. It is best not to have all the answers. Pointing people to Him will result in their personal growth. People are more likely to remember lessons learned through personal discovery. As they wrestle with God through scripture, prayer and meditation, He will teach them. God works at many levels before, during and after the week at camp.

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Pre-Camp Preparation:

We encourage you to take some time before camp to do a spiritual inventory of your heart. Use the following verse as a prayer and listen to what God reveals. Journal and pray through those things. Use the spaces below each section for journaling.

“Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life.” Psalm 139:23-24 (NLT)

Use this time to bring personal pain to God. He may use the pain you are experiencing to help a camper. Ask God for help to be at peace despite this pain. Ask His help to hear His voice in it. Surrender it to Him for His healing and His use. 2 Corinthians 1:3-4

Ask God to reveal any relational issues that are unresolved. Prayerfully and humbly surrender yourself to go to that person to make amends prior to camp. Matthew 5:21-23

Ask Him to help you learn to depend on Him in prayer as a moment by moment exercise. Begin now to develop habits of drawing upon the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit every day. Nothing is too small for Him. Nothing is too hard for Him. Nothing is too big for Him. Write a prayer about something you will depend upon Him for today.

Ask Him to show you where you are taking on worries and cares rather than depending upon Him. Make a list of those things throughout the day. Ask yourself, “Why do I choose to carry these burdens? What keeps me from bringing them to Him?”

The underlying theme throughout this curriculum is from Jeremiah 29:11. “For I know the plans I have for you,” says the Lord. “They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope.”

Understanding the context of this promise is important. It is made by the Lord to His people, the Nation of Israel in a letter written by the Prophet Jeremiah during their exile in Babylon. It was a time of deep distress for Israel. They had been unfaithful to Him and were reaping the consequences of their disobedience to God. This discipline, though unpleasant was intended for the good of His people. God was communicating that He would be faithful to them, even though they had been unfaithful to Him. God assured them He would be with them during their 70 years of Babylonian captivity. This promise of God’s plan for Israel’s future would carry them through times of doubt, darkness, fear, loneliness and depression.

How can this promise given hundreds of years ago bring comfort to children who live in exile from home and family today? They may fear that they are being punished for their mistakes or for those of their family and that is why their lives have been torn apart like the walls of Jerusalem.

- May God give us wisdom to communicate His grace. Psalm 103:8
- Jesus came to show the limitless reach of God’s love. Psalm 103:9-10.
- Jesus came to remove our sin, which causes endless loss. Psalm 103:11-12
- Jesus came to set us free from fear and live in His security that will never fail. Psalm 103:13-17

Though we cannot explain the why’s of the harm they have endured, we can point them to the One who can give them hope that will never be disappointed. Romans 10:11

In the same way that He gave this promise to strengthen Israel through exile, He gives us His promises to cling to while we live on earth. When times are dark and we are afraid, lonely and discouraged we can find hope and peace in the scriptures. This week, you have the privilege of pointing children to God and His promises.

Meditate on Jeremiah 29:11 asking God to cast His vision for your campers this week.

Write it out in the space below.

A Challenge to Journal:

The book of Nehemiah begins with these words: “These are the memoirs of Nehemiah, the son of Hacaliah.” This book reads like a journal that Nehemiah kept as he followed God’s call to Jerusalem. He writes with frankness and deep humility. His prayers rise from the pages in spontaneous moments of need. He wrote statements of fact in one sentence and in the next he would be calling out to God for help. Bring this devotional to camp and use the backs of the pages to write out your prayers and record your impressions. You may only have time or energy to write one word – but let God speak to you in those moments. Look for the ways He is providing for you. Expect Him to meet you. Make every step this week a step of faith. Pray for His help to point the campers to Him and watch God build a firm foundation for their lives.

Day One: Read Nehemiah 1:1-11

Theme: I choose a firm foundation.

Describe the setting and the situation in which Nehemiah lived and worked. Who is mentioned? What events are they talking about? When did this take place?

How did Nehemiah respond to the message from Jerusalem? How does his example challenge or encourage you?

How had Israel left their foundation of faith in God and what was the result? What results do we see of this attitude in today's world?

What do you learn from Nehemiah's prayer in verses 5-11?

How does Nehemiah's attitude of confession of sin compare with yours?

What promises from God's word can we claim as we pray for ourselves, our campers, and our culture?

*This is a very good reminder for us. No matter where we are at, God is always there for us. Even though the wall in Jerusalem was in ruins and the people were in exile, God had a plan to bring them back and rebuild the wall. This helps me hold on to the promises of God. As a counselor I would be encouraged to let my campers know they can claim the same promises. Their current situation may not be the best but there is always hope and promise from God. **Tony Choi, RFK VP of Finance and Former RFK Camp Director.***

Journaling Section

Day Two: Read Nehemiah 2:1-10 Theme: I choose to trust God.

Imagine you are a fly on the wall in the king's court. How would you describe the conversation between the king and Nehemiah to someone who wasn't in the room on that day? Who are the characters? What are they doing? What time of year?

What do you observe about Nehemiah's working relationship with the king in these verses? What does this tell you about both the king and about Nehemiah?

How did Nehemiah demonstrate trust in God in verses 1-10? What do you think may have happened if he refused to wait for God's timing?

What did God provide for Nehemiah's journey? What do you learn from Nehemiah's example in this passage?

What do you need for your journey to camp? Write a list below and describe how you will trust God for those provisions.

When Nehemiah went to the court of King Artaxerxes, it was to serve the King as his cupbearer. This was a daily routine for the King, but an intense time of trusting in God for Nehemiah as his life was on the line every day to ensure the King's food and drink were safe.

It was the month of Nisan (April) known as the month of new beginnings. The flowers were in bloom, and life was good! It was also the time of Passover when the Jews remembered their deliverance from slavery in Egypt. As the King's servant, Nehemiah wasn't supposed to show personal emotion or sadness... but today, he did. There was a trust that the King had built with Nehemiah as his life was in his servant's hands every day.

With the Queen right beside him, King Artaxerxes showed compassion on Nehemiah when he asked, “why do you look so sad.” Nehemiah knew that it was never acceptable to disturb the king with your own issues, but he had fasted and prayed for the right opportunity to let the King know what was going on in Jerusalem. This was it! He had been praying for this moment for nearly four months. He had an open door to share all that was on his heart concerning the destruction of his hometown. If he had not waited for the right timing, or the invitation of the King to share what was on his heart, he could have been thrown out of the palace, lost his job, and even killed!

This was a time of incredible opportunity for Nehemiah to ask the King for everything he would need to return to Jerusalem and oversee the rebuilding of the walls of the city. He had spent much time in prayer and planning for what he would need to return to Jerusalem. He asked for letters from the King to allow safe passage through the land as he traveled. He asked for all the building materials he would need for the construction of the walls, and even a home for himself. In addition, the King knew he would need protection and help. Artaxerxes sent army officers and horses along as well. God had answered the prayer of Nehemiah!

These passages scripture are a model for us to go to God in prayer and ask Him for help in our time of need. Ask God to give you the wisdom and insight to know what you will need for your “journey” during the week at camp. There will be opposition along the way, just like that of Sanballat and Tobiah in this chapter. Be prepared for challenges to “pop up” that you didn’t expect. They are often a sign that the enemy doesn’t like what you are doing as you help to rebuild the lives of children. Remember, even in times of trouble and doubt, God wants us to seek Him and ask for help. He is with us, and will provide more than we can begin to imagine!

Scott Murrish, RFK Ambassador Midwest Region

Journaling Section

Describe Nehemiah's inspection of the wall. What did he discover? How did this prepare him for the task?

Describe the way Nehemiah communicated his mission to the city officials. What were the results? What do you learn from his approach?

Nehemiah went from the approval of the elders to the immediate opposition of his enemies. Where are you experiencing approval and/or opposition in your service to God?

What do you learn about faith and courage from Nehemiah's response to opposition?

How will you apply these lessons in your current situation? How will you encourage someone else to trust God amidst opposition they are facing?

What words could you use to encourage our campers who face enemy opposition on a regular basis?

V.11. Nehemiah wandered about at night with a few others inspecting and observing. V.17 He saw the damage and the destruction. V.20 He declared, "The God of heaven will give us success." This summer, after your evening Staff or Counselor break time, wander about your camp, observe and inspect, understand the damage that has been done to the children, then declare and expect that, "The God of heaven will give us success." **Jeff Juhala, RFK Inc. VP of Training and Ministry Programs**

Journaling Section

Day Four – Read Nehemiah 3

Theme: I choose to work in unity with God’s people.

How would you describe the work being done in this chapter? What are some of the repeated words?

As you read the names of families and types of people involved in this project, which ones stand out to you and why? What are your observations?

How are you involved in a building project with God’s people? Which group of people do you most identify with and why?

Who is working next to you in this project of restoration of the shattered lives of your campers? How will you choose to work in unity with them? What attitudes of pride or self-promotion will you need to lay aside to be God’s hands and heart of restoration this week?

The Royal Family experience mirrors Nehemiah 3. It is my favorite passage in the Old Testament. There are three main points that captured my heart as a young man. Little did I realize Chapter 3 would be a model for Royal Family KIDS.

First, the NAMES. Yes, even the most difficult names to pronounce. Names were important to Nehemiah as well as to the person who hears his/her name mentioned. I have visualized the people working on the wall in their sections, wearing a purple name tag. He knew their names and he knew how to deploy his “people resources”. In his memoir, Chapter 3, Nehemiah immortalizes the people who assisted in repairing, reclaiming and restoring the wall. Their names are a reminder for us as we work on repairing, reclaiming and restoring our campers lives.

For a learning exercise count the names of the workers on the wall. Can you imagine a picture entitled “Builders of the Wall” just like our camp picture?

The second word is REPAIR. Repair or restore to the original design. God has a purpose for each of the children who attend a week of camp. As workers at camp, we have been called to work hand in hand with God in repairing the children who come from the “Hard Places of Life”.

The campers’ emotional walls have been torn down by derogatory words that hurt and beatings that cause pain or the lack of food and nourishment that causes stress. Many of our campers come from places where their minds have been broken down through ridicule or neglect.

It’s during the one week of the year in the “Cathedral of the Outdoors” that the broken children are “repaired” by the people of God. We observe the process of the repairs in the smiles or the laughter or the singing. The process is at work as children recite Bible verses or use a hammer to finish their first wood working project. We hear the squeals of delight as they catch their first fish or experience their first bike ride. We can see the healing taking place as the children become restored. What a privilege.

Did you count the number of times the word “repair” is used.

The last words that pulsate off the page of Chapter 3 are “next to”. “Next to” implies close proximity. It says we are connected in purpose and calling. Together we are making sure we fulfill the purpose.

There are times when we celebrate significant occasions or times we may attend a sporting event or participate in some physical activity like hiking or running; but the times we come together with one purpose, called by God to execute, we experience synergism—the parts are greater than the whole. When we serve next to our friends, God accomplishes more together than by ourselves. The week at camp is a synergistic experience with God’s people demonstrating unity and togetherness as the Royal Family of God. We share His love together.

Count the number of times “next to” is used in Chapter 3.

*Dear Lord, as we prepare ourselves for a week of dispensing your love, help us to pray for the names of our campers. Let us be prepared for your God moments to help repair and restore our campers. Let us remember that we do the week alongside others and it’s not about ourselves. Help us be your servants working together to fulfill your purposes. **Wayne Tesch, RFK Co-Founder; President & CEO of For the Children Foundation***

Journaling Section

Day Five – Read Nehemiah 4:1-23

Theme: I chose to pray to God.

What is happening in this chapter? What emotions are displayed? Describe character traits of Sanballat and Tobiah.

How did Nehemiah respond in this situation? What actions did he take? What do you learn from his example?

What do you learn from the people's response to their enemies? How does Nehemiah's example of care for their safety challenge or encourage you?

Where in your life are you dealing with severe opposition? How will you apply the lessons and examples of these prayerful responses at camp?

In this chapter, you see that thanks to Sanballat and Tobiah, Nehemiah and the Jews faced adversity over and over again. But Nehemiah PRAYED and encouraged them to keep at it and join together. They were accomplishing the job because it says... v.6 "the people had a heart for the work." V.14, 20 Nehemiah also reminds them, "Don't be afraid. Put your minds on the Master and God will fight for us!" As you go through your Camp week, you may face adversity, you may get tired, and at times you may feel you are in over your head. But if you join together, put your mind on Jesus, and if your heart is for the work of making a difference in the lives of these children... AND YOU PRAY, you just possibly may change the trajectory of a child's life for eternity! In the face of adversity...CHOSE TO PRAY! Laurie Fenneuff, RFK Ambassador – Mid-Atlantic Region

Journaling Section

Day Six – Read Nehemiah 6:1-19

Theme: I choose to trust God during times of attack.

Who are the main characters in this passage? Describe their plots.

How did Nehemiah respond to their threats and intimidation?

How do you think Nehemiah had the discernment to see through their plots? What do you learn from his example?

In what ways have the attacks and opposition to your ministry at camp intensified as the date for camp draws near? What about your fellow Camp Staff and Volunteers?

Who is supporting you through obstacles, spiritual attack, and enemy opposition? Who needs your support, and how will you help them?

The urgent will often beckon us away from the important. The enemies of Nehemiah attempted to lure him from his task, but his response was, "Why should the work stop while I leave it and come down to you?" Some of the most effective attacks are masked in subtlety.

*The important work this week is relationship with the campers. Sure, there are many things, important things to draw you away from the main event. Soon you'll be heading home and the kids back to their foster homes. Finish the work; create the memory that will sustain him or her through a dark time. The time you spend rebuilding that which was broken down by others could be the moment that changes everything in the life of that one. **John Schwider, RFK Ambassador to Great Lakes Region***

Journaling Section

Day Seven – Read Nehemiah 8:1-12

Theme: I choose to follow the Bible.

Describe the groups of people who assembled for the reading of God’s word. What about this group is interesting to you and why?

What do you observe about the attitude of the people as they listened to the reading of God’s word? Why do you think they were weeping?

How did the Levites and the other leaders encourage the people as they listened and wept over God’s word? What do you learn from their example?

How has reading and studying God’s word caused you to rejoice and to weep?

How can you prepare to help your camper process grief at camp? What passages can you share with them to help them find joy in God’s word as well?

ALL people came together – voluntarily. It was by choice. AND all people came together as ONE. The people were ready and willing to hear the Word from Ezra because they knew they needed a spiritual foundation. There were tears because they knew they had neglected the Word for so long. But there was renewal because of the hope that was heard (really heard) for the first time through the scripture. You have come together voluntarily. Your campers have come because they were chosen by our Heavenly Father for this very week. Pray that as the truths from the bible are taught to these precious ones and heard for the first time, they provide a new foundation for their lives. God never wants us to sit in our mourning. Help your campers see the strength that comes from God through His word that will help them in their days ahead. V.10 Do not sorrow, for the joy of the Lord is your strength. Kerry Rhodes, RFK Camp Growth Coordinator

Journaling Section

What are the main points Jesus is making as He closes the Sermon on the Mount with this parable?

What are the two different types of foundations and to what are they compared?

What are the warnings and the promises you see in this passage?

How have the storms in your life revealed the strength or the sandiness of your life's "foundation"?

What teaching of Jesus are you hearing but not obeying? How is this impacting your life, your family?

How will you pray for discernment about this? Who can you trust to be honest about what they see in your life?

You are stepping into a great spiritual battle by serving "the least of these" at Royal Family KIDS. This is the enemy's pipeline, and he is fiercely protective of the destruction he seeks to sow in these precious little lives. At the same time, he will seek to pull you down by distracting you or causing personal pain and frustrations. But we serve the God of Heaven, who has architected your involvement in this ministry from the beginning of time. As long as we choose to build on the Rock, we will be secure in His plan. The storms will come, the waters will rise, and everyone who trusts in earthly things will see their hopes dashed in the wind and waters. So stand fast and put your trust in the Rock, who is Jesus Christ. God will reveal amazing things to you through these storms. Allow your life and faith to be refined through the process, and you will come to have greater faith than you ever felt possible. These children will feel your steadfast love for them and see your faith in Jesus, and it may be the only time they witness authentic love and faith. We will be praying for you, and we're thankful for your service. **Chris Carmichael, President, Royal Family KIDS**

Journaling Section