**Rebuilding Community: Jigsaws**

*There is an accompanying PowerPoint for this assembly*

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| **Age range:** Primary |
| **Theme:** *This is one of several different options for this specific time in your school community’s life. You may need to tailor this script to suit the needs, age range & levels of concerns of your school community, which of course includes adults as well as children. Collective worship may not be the time to deal with children’s specific worries and concerns, so you may need teaching staff to do this sensitively within the context of their safe classroom environment – whatever this looks like! This resource is not designed to cause worry in your school community, but to give you a range of responses that might help children understand the current context and feel more empowered.* ***This assembly introduces a story about Nehemiah from the Bible, which will link acts of worship over the coming weeks, and also the theme of rebuilding.*** |
| **Resources:** * The PowerPoint slides are numbered with a point in the script so you can find your way, and the bits in bold show you where to click on to activate the next slide or animation.
* Give each child a piece of a jigsaw puzzle you no longer need for the reflection
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| **Gathering:*** **Slide 1:** Use your usual gathering greeting to welcome your school community
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| **Engaging:*** **Slides 2-8 ‘Can we build it?!’ game:** KS1 version – name the construction toy from the pictures; KS2 version – say more specifically how each relates to ‘building’
* **Slides 9-12: Jigsaws** Talk about the different images of the jigsaw puzzle – share ideas about how you ‘build’ a jigsaw puzzle, discuss especially where there are different opinions about how e.g. edges first / last, obvious picture sections, sometimes different puzzles mean that we have to find different ways of putting it together; lots of muddle before it gets sorted out!
* **Slide 13: Our school community is a bit like a puzzle that we’re building in different sections.** For now, we only have ……..classes in school, and how they are learning is a bit different from how it was before.
* **Slide 14:** Share the story overleaf (**Nehemiah and the Big Rebuild**) as this will set the context for this set of resources to support your school as they return. It’s important to use this story, as it will be continued or referred to in subsequent weeks.
* As with the people of God in the story, part of our school community is still not with us. Like the people, we are getting our school and our hearts ready for when we are all back together again.
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| **Responding (and words for worship):** **Slide 15:** …We’ve been thinking today about the story of Nehemiah’s rebuild ….…that he chose to hear God’s voice, and be **courageous** as he returned to Jerusalem….…as he learned new skills….as he realised what a big job rebuilding was going to be….….Nehemiah experienced many different emotions, many of which we are feeling at this time….….rebuilding our school community is going to take time as well….**Slide 16:** …look at your piece of the puzzle…....it’s easy to think that one little piece doesn’t matter, but wherever it is, it is still a part of the puzzle...….like the pieces of the puzzle, we are all a part of our school community, wherever we are…We’re going to use our puzzle piece in the quietness now – you can choose whether you think, or whether you pray. [Point out ‘lugs’ and ‘holes’ so children can find them as you think together]***Look at the patterns or pictures on your puzzle piece:*** the piece of the puzzle that you hold is as unique as you: and each one of you matters, to our school community – and to God.***Now look at the ‘holes’ in your puzzle piece – the bits where the lugs fit:*** there are people missing from our school community, people we are missing. The puzzle will not be complete until we are all back at school – but children at home are thinking about you, just as you are thinking about them. Hold them in your heart – and pray for them in the silence….***Lastly, look at the ‘lugs’ on your puzzle piece – the bit that helps it to ‘fit in’ with other pieces:*** we are all going to have to learn how to ‘fit’ together again. We will need to be patient with each other and to be kind to each other. Think about what you can do to help everyone in your ‘class’ get along. Pray for them in the quietness…**God, Please help us to remember that we are all important in our school community, that we each matter. Help us to help each other ‘fit’ in. Amen** |
| **Sending: Sing a song from your school collection, that children love to sing****Slide 18: Leave children with the jigsaw piece as a reminder** |

**Nehemiah and the Big Rebuild (Part One)**

*Every time you hear the word* ***‘build’*** *or* ***‘rebuild’****, ‘build’ using your fists (like in the Wise & Foolish Man song) – or use the Bob the Builder© refrain ‘Can we fix it?!’, whichever you think your school community would prefer – or just read the story! You choose…..*

Nehemiah was not a ***build-er***: he was the cup-bearer to the King of Babylon. It was a very important job in the royal household.

Most of God’s people were once again far, far away from home, living in exile in Babylon. They had never forgotten about Israel, the land that they called ‘home’ but had begun to ***build*** new lives for themselves in Babylon, not ever imagining that they would return.

One day, Nehemiah had a visitor from his homeland, a long-lost brother, who told him stories of Jerusalem that filled Nehemiah’s eyes with tears.

‘The walls of our great city, Jerusalem, are crumbling, it’s gates have been burned to the ground and all the ***build-ings*** lie in ruins.’ Nehemiah’s brother said.

Nehemiah’s heart was as broken as the walls, but he did the very best thing that he could do – he wept….and he prayed…. and he poured out his heart to God who ***built*** the world, and asked him to once again help His people.

Next day, Nehemiah took wine to the king, who noticed his tear-stained face and sad eyes and asked him what was wrong.

‘I want to go home’ Nehemiah replied ‘and ***rebuild*** Jerusalem, which lies in ruins. If you are willing, O King, please let me go. I will also need wood to ***build***with, so please send this too.’

Then Nehemiah took the long journey home to Jerusalem, surrounded by the King’s soldiers to keep him safe. That night, he went out to the walls to see what needed to be done – and to plan the great ***rebuild***. He knew that God, the great Master-***builder*** would be with him and help him to know what to do. Everyone who was left in Jerusalem helped to ***build*** the gates and the walls, to keep the people safe. It was an enormous job!

But Nehemiah knew that he wasn’t just ***building*** the city, he was ***building*** a community again, so when he saw that some of the people were hungry, he fed them: when people were being unfair, he challenged them and reminded them of what’s important to God, who ***built*** the world.

Now they were ready for some of the people to return from Babylon, to help ***rebuild*** the rest of the city: houses, shops, businesses, farms – and to ***rebuild*** the great Temple. They brought with them everything they could to help with the work and ***rebuild*** their communities: gold, silver, cattle and ***building*** materials.

The ***rebuilding*** of Jerusalem continued for seven months until people had homes to live in and families were settled. But God, the master-***builder,*** had more work to do. He knew that his people needed more than buildings and homes – they needed to remember who they were…..to ***rebuild*** their hearts. *And you’ll hear how next time!*

**I wonder….?**

…why Nehemiah was so sad when he heard the news from his brother?....

…how Nehemiah felt to be given the job of re-building Jerusalem?...

….or how it felt to return home?....

….I wonder what the most difficult part of the re-building was?....

….and how you might re-build a community?....or someone’s *heart*?!....

….I wonder how this story might help us today?....