



WEEK TWO – JUNE 2019 – PRETEEN

Bible Story: *Walking on Sunshine • Acts 5:17–42*

Key Question: *How can you choose joy even when you're not happy?*

Memory Verse: *“The fruit the Holy Spirit produces is love, joy and peace. It is being patient, kind and good. It is being faithful and gentle and having control of oneself.” Galatians 5:22–23a, NIV*

Life App: *What God is doing in you to change the world around you*

Basic Truth: *I can trust God no matter what.*

Summary: Next, we head to Acts 5:17–42 where Luke records the trouble that Jesus' disciples faced when they started spreading the message of Jesus. No matter what happened to them, the Holy Spirit gave them what they needed to find joy, even when it was difficult.

PRE–SERVICE SOCIAL ACTIVITY

1. Get Your Head in the Game

Play: an activity that encourages learning through following guidelines and working as a group

What You Need: Index Cards; Pens

What You Do:

- Welcome kids and spend time engaging in conversation and catching up.
- Invite kids to place their offerings in the *For Everyone* box on the wall near the main entrance
- Give each student four note cards and a pen.
- Invite everyone to write a noun (person, place, or thing) on two separate cards.
- On the other two cards, ask them to write adjectives (words that describe) such as tall, green, or humorous.
- Collect the cards, keeping the nouns and adjectives in separate piles.
- Shuffle the piles separately and place them face down on the floor or table within reach of all the students.
- Explain that they will take turns picking one card from each pile and reading the words together (adjective then noun).
- Before each round, ask everyone to make a crazy face and freeze it. The goal of the person reading the cards is to say the phrase in a way that is sure to make someone laugh.
- Award a point to the reader for each person who can't hold it together while the phrase is read a few times.
- Switch readers and repeat until everyone has had several turns then declare a winner.

What You Say:

*“It’s so great to laugh together and even be kind of crazy at times. Smiles and laughter are part of being joyful, but did you know that we can have joy even when things are not going all that great? It’s true. **[Transition] Let’s go to Large Group and discover what it takes to be joyful—even when we’re not feeling all that happy.**”*

Lead your group to the Large Group area.

LARGE GROUP

OVERVIEW:

Key Question: *How can you choose joy even when you're not happy? Preteens are starting to understand that being happy and having joy are not the same thing. They will get the chance to explore how they rely on God to help them experience joy even life is hard.*

SMALL GROUP

1. Take a Snapshot

[Application Activity]

Connect: an activity that invites kids to share with others and build on their understanding

What You Need: “Word Search” Activity Page, pens

What You Do:

- Give each student a copy of “Word Search” and a pen.
- Invite them to write words in the squares that describe things that make people feel joyful and things that rob our joy. Words can be written backwards, diagonally, vertically, or horizontally and should intersect as much as possible.
- Direct them to write each word they put in the puzzle on the lines at the bottom and fill in any remaining boxes in the grid with random letters.
- When finished, ask them to exchange puzzles and race to see who can finish first by finding and circling all the hidden words.
- Invite everyone to share the words they circled and discuss reasons those things make us feel joyful or sad.
- Point out common words that several or all of the kids included and ask why each chose those words.
- Encourage student to share stories related to the words they put on their puzzles.

What You Say:

“Life has a lot of ups and downs. If we are joyful only when things are going our way, we will have A LOT of unhappy days. We need to tie our joy to something other than getting what we want when we want it. Plus, we need to remember that joy is a Fruit of the Spirit, which means God can help us have joy, even when we may not be happy and even when things aren't going the way we want. Joy is bigger than a good day. It's something God's doing inside us that can show up on the outside if we choose to let it.”

2. Discussion Questions

[Application Activity]

Connect: an activity that invites kids to share with others and build on their understanding

What You Need: N/A

What You Do:

- Ask:
 - If someone asked you what the secret to happiness is, what would you tell them?
 - Is it crazy to think that we can have joy when we're sad?
 - Share about a time when things were not going well for you (or someone you know) but you were still joyful. What did you learn about joy from that experience?
 - Is it God's job to give us everything that will make us happy? Why or why not?
 - Joy is a choice. Agree or disagree? (Give students the opportunity to debate against whether or not joy is actually a choice. Try to help them feel like there's no right or wrong answer; what's important is that they express their opinions and think critically about the concept of joy.)
 - How can you choose joy even when you're not happy?

3. Verses to Take With You

[Memory Verse Activity]

Create: an activity that explores spiritual ideas through the process of drawing, building, and designing

What You Need: Bible

What You Do:

- Invite someone to read Philippians 4:4 to the group.
- Remind students that showing joy isn't about pretending or faking it, but it's about finding the good in a situation, being thankful for what God has done for us.
- Ask:
 - When everything is going wrong, why can we still have joy?
 - Why are the words "in the Lord" an important part of this verse? If you removed them, how would the meaning of the verse change?
- Invite students to work with a partner to create a tongue twister based on the meaning of Philippians 4:4. For example, "Rejoice, Joyce!"
- Challenge each group to say one another's tongue twisters three times as fast as they can.

4. Make It Personal With Prayer

[Prayer Activity]

Reflect: an activity that creates space for personal understanding and application

What You Need: Pens, index cards, "Happy Sad Face" Activity Page

What You Do:

- Remind students that having an attitude of gratitude is a huge part of being joyful. We can ALWAYS be grateful—which means we can ALWAYS have joy.
- Give each person an index card and pen.
- Show students how to draw a Sad-to-Happy face as shown on the Activity Page and direct them to draw it on one side of their note card.
- Ask them to write a prayer request on the back of the card for themselves or someone else who is going through a hard time and needs to find joy.
- Exchange cards.
- Pray (silently or aloud) about the things that are hard for that person right now, asking God to turn their unhappy attitude into joy—even if the circumstances don't change.

What You Say:

“Dear God, knowing and following YOU means we ALWAYS have a reason to be joyful. You can take our worst day and turn it upside-down into something for which we can trust and thank You. Help us to look for and find something to be grateful for in every situation. Turn our sadness into joy and give us a happy heart that knows You are always there. In Jesus’ name, amen.”